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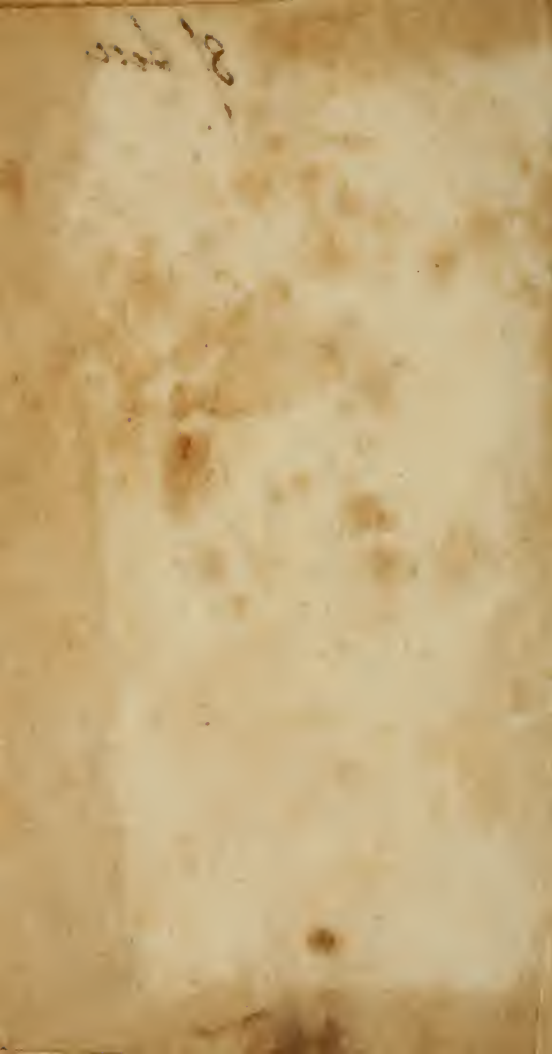
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# THE TASK.



That calls the unwonted villager abroad  
With all her little ones a sportive train,  
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,

*Boston Published by T. Ballington N<sup>o</sup> 31 Washington St.*

# POEMS,

BY

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.



IN THREE VOLUMES.



VOL. II.

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STEREOTYPED BY T. H. CARTER & CO. BOSTON.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.



THE history of the following production, is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the *Sora* for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth, at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume!

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are suscepti-

ble of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention: and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.



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# THE TASK.

## BOOK I.

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### THE SOFA.

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#### ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

Historical deduction of seats, from the Stool to the Sofa—A Schoolboy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commended—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thrasher—The necessity and benefit of exercise—The works of nature superiour to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South Sea islanders compassionate, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

---

I SING the *Sofa*. I, who lately sang  
Truth, Hope, and Charity,\* and touch'd with awe  
The solemn chords, and, with a trembling hand,  
Escap'd with pain from that advent'rous flight,  
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme ; 5  
The theme, though humble, yet august and proud  
Th' occasion—for the fair commands the song.  
Time was, when clothing, sumptuous or for use,  
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.  
As yet black breeches were not ; satin smooth, 10  
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :  
The hardy chief, upon the rugged rock  
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank

\* See Poems, VOL. I.

Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,  
 Fearless of wrong, repos'd his weary strength. 15  
 Those barb'rous ages past, succeeded next  
 The birthday of Invention ; weak at first,  
 Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.  
 Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs  
 Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm 20  
 A massy slab, in fashion square or round.  
 On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,  
 And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms :  
 And such in ancient halls and mansions drear  
 May still be seen ; but perforated sore, 25  
 And drill'd in holes, the solid oak is found,  
 By worms voracious eating through and through.  
 At length a generation more refin'd  
 Improv'd the simple plan ; made three legs four,  
 Gave them a twisted form vermicular, 30  
 And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuff'd,  
 Induc'd a splendid cover, green and blue,  
 Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought  
 And woven close, or needlework sublime.  
 There might ye see the piony spread wide, 35  
 The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,  
 Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,  
 And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.  
 Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright,  
 With nature's varnish ; sever'd into stripes, 40  
 That interlac'd each other, these supplied  
 Of texture firm a lattice-work, that brac'd  
 The new machine, and it became a chair.  
 But restless was the chair ; the back erect  
 Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease ; 45  
 The slipp'ry seat betrayed the sliding part  
 That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,  
 Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.  
 These for the rich ; the rest, whom Fate had plac'd  
 In modest mediocrity, content 50  
 With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides,

Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,  
 With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,  
 Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fix'd,  
 If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd 55  
 Than the firm oak, of which the frame was form'd.  
 No want of timber then was felt or fear'd  
 In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood  
 Pond'rous and fix'd by its own massy weight.  
 But elbows still were wanting ; these, some say, 60  
 An alderman of Cripplegate contrived ;  
 And some ascribe th' invention to a priest  
 Burly, and big, and studious of his ease.  
 But rude at first, and not with easy slope  
 Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs, 65  
 And bruise'd the side ; and, elevated high,  
 Taught the rais'd shoulders to invade the ears.  
 Long time elaps'd or e'er our rugged sires  
 Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,  
 And ill at ease behind. The ladies first 70  
 'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.  
 Ingenious Fancy, never better pleas'd  
 Than when employ'd t' accommodate the fair,  
 Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devis'd  
 The soft settee ; one elbow at each end, 75  
 And in the midst an elbow it receiv'd,  
 United, yet divided, twain at once.  
 So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne ;  
 And so two citizens, who take the air,  
 Close pack'd, and smiling, in a chaise and one. 80  
 But relaxation of the languid frame,  
 By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,  
 Was bliss reserv'd for happier days. So slow  
 The growth of what is excellent ; so hard  
 T' attain perfection in this nether world. 85  
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,  
 Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,  
 And Luxury th' accomplish'd *Sofa* last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hir'd to watch the sick,  
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he, 90  
 Who quits the coach-box at a midnight hour,  
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,  
 His legs depending at the open door.  
 Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,  
 The tedious rector drawling o'er his head ; 95  
 And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep  
 Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead ;  
 Nor his, who quits the box at midnight hour  
 To slumber in the carriage more secure ;  
 Nor sleep enjoy'd by curate in his desk ; 100  
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,  
 Compar'd with the repose the *Sofa* yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live  
 Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)  
 From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe 105  
 Of libertine Excess. The *Sofa* suits  
 The gouty limb, 'tis true : but gouty limb,  
 Though on a *Sofa*, may I never feel :  
 For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes  
 Of grassy swarth, close cropp'd by nibbling sheep, 110  
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm  
 Of thorny boughs ; have lov'd the rural walk  
 O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,  
 E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds  
 T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames ; 115  
 And still remember, not without regret,  
 Of hours, that sorrow since has much endear'd,  
 How oft, my slice of pocket store consum'd,  
 Still hung'ring, pennyless, and far from home,  
 I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws, 120  
 Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss  
 The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.  
 Hard fare ! but such as boyish appetite  
 Disdains not ; nor the palate, undeprav'd  
 By culinary arts, unsav'ry deems. 125

No *Sofa* then awaited my return ;  
Nor *Sofa* then I needed. Youth repairs  
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil  
Incurring short fatigue ; and, though our years,  
As life declines, speed rapidly away, 130  
And not a year but pilfers as he goes  
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep ;  
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees  
Their length and colour from the locks they spare ;  
The elastick spring of an unwearied foot, 135  
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence ;  
That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,  
Mine have not pilfer'd yet ; nor yet impair'd 140  
My relish of fair prospect ; scenes that sooth'd  
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find  
Still soothing, and of pow'r to charm me still.  
And witness, dear companion of my walks,  
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive 145  
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,  
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth  
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—  
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.  
Thou know'st my praise of nature most sincere, 150  
And that my raptures are not conjur'd up  
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
But genuine, and art partner of them all.  
How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne 155  
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,  
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,  
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.  
Thence, with what pleasure have we just discern'd  
The distant plough slow moving, and beside 160  
His lab'ring team, that swerv'd not from the track,  
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy !  
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain



Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,  
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course 165  
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
Stand, never overlook'd, our fav'rite elms,  
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut ;  
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale, 170  
The sloping land recedes into the clouds ;  
Displaying on its varied side the grace  
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tow'r,  
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells  
Just undulates upon the list'ning ear, 175  
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote.  
Scenes must be beautiful, which daily view'd  
Please daily, and whose novelty survives  
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.  
Praise justly due to those that I describe. 180  
Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,  
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore  
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds,  
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood  
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike 185  
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,  
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind ;  
Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,  
And all their leaves fast flutt'ring, all at once.  
Nor less composure waits upon the roar 190  
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice  
Of neighb'ring fountain, or of rills that slip  
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall  
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length  
In matted grass, that with a livelier green 195  
Betrays the secret of their silent course.  
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,  
But animated nature sweeter still,  
To sooth and satisfy the human ear.  
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one 200  
The livelong night ; nor these alone, whose notes



Nice-finger'd Art must emulate in vain,  
 But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime  
 In still-repeated circles, screaming loud,  
 The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl, 205  
 That hails the rising moon, have charms for me,  
 Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,  
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,  
 And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought 210  
 Devis'd the weatherhouse, that useful toy !  
 Fearless of humid air and gath'ring rains,  
 Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself !  
 More delicate his tim'rous mate retires.  
 When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet, 215  
 Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,  
 Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,  
 The task of new discov'ries falls on me.  
 At such a season, and with such a charge,  
 Once went I forth ; and found, till then unknown, 220  
 A cottage, whither oft we since repair :  
 'Tis perch'd upon the green hill top, but close  
 Environ'd with a ring of branching elms,  
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen  
 Peeps at the vale below ; so thick beset 225  
 With foliage of such dark redundant growth,  
 I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.  
 And, hidden as it is, and far remote  
 From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear  
 In village or in town, the bay of curs 230  
 Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,  
 And infants clam'rous whether pleas'd or pain'd,  
 Oft have I wish'd the peaceful coverlet mine.  
 Here, I have said, at least I should possess  
 The poet's treasure, Silence, and indulge 235  
 The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.  
 Vain thought ! the dweller in that still retreat  
 Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.  
 Its elevated site forbids the wretch

To drink sweet waters of the crystal well ; 240  
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,  
And, heavy laden, brings his bev'rage home,  
Far fetch'd and little worth ; nor seldom waits,  
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,  
To hear his creaking panniers at the door, 245  
Angry, and sad, and his last crust consum'd.  
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest* !  
If solitude make scant the means of life,  
Society for me !—thou seeming sweet,  
Be still a pleasing object in my view ; 250  
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade  
Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,  
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.  
Our fathers knew the value of a screen 255  
From sultry suns : and, in their shaded walks  
And long protracted bow'rs, enjoy'd at noon  
The gloom and coolness of declining day.  
We bear our shades about us ; self-depriv'd  
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread, 260  
And range an Indian waste without a tree.  
Thanks to Benevolus\*—he spares me yet  
These chestnuts rang'd in corresponding lines ;  
And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves  
The obsolete prolixity of shade. 265

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)  
A sudden steep upen a rustic bridge,  
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip  
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.  
Hence, ankle deep in moss and flow'ry thyme, 270  
We mount again, and feel at ev'ry step  
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,  
Rais'd by the mole, the miner of the soil.  
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,  
Disfigures Earth : and, plotting in the dark, 275

\* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Under-wood.

Toils much to earn a monumental pile  
That may record the mischief he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove  
That crowns it ! yet not all its pride secures  
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd 280  
By rural carvers, who with knives deface  
The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,  
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.  
So strong the zeal t' immortalize himself  
Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few, 285  
Few transient years, won from th' abyss abhorr'd  
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,  
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye ;  
And, posted on this speculative height,  
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here 290  
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.  
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek  
The middle field ; but, scatter'd by degrees,  
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.  
There from the sunburnt hayfield homeward creeps  
The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge, 296  
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by ;  
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team  
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.  
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene, 300  
Diversified with trees of ev'ry growth,  
Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks  
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,  
Within the twilight of their distant shades ;  
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood 305  
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.  
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,  
Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,  
And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,  
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf, 310  
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm ;  
Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,  
Lord of the woods, the long surviving oak.

Some glossy leav'd, and shining in the sun,  
 The maple and the beech of oily nuts 315  
 Prolifick, and the lime at dewy eve  
 Diffusing odours : nor unnoted pass  
 The sycamore, capricious in attire,  
 Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet  
 Have chang'd the woods, in scarlet honours bright.  
 O'er these, but, far beyond (a spacious map 321  
 Of hill and valley interpos'd between)  
 The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,  
 Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,  
 As bashful, yet impatient to be seen. 325  
 Hence the declivity is sharp and short,  
 And such the reascent ; between them weeps  
 A little naiad her impov'rish'd urn  
 All summer long, which winter fills again.  
 The folded gates would bar my progress now, 330  
 But that the lord\* of this enclos'd demesne,  
 Communicative of the good he owns,  
 Admits me to a share ; the guiltless eye  
 Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.  
 Refreshing change ! where now the blazing sun ? 335  
 By short transition we have lost his glare,  
 And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.  
 Ye fallen avenues ! once more I mourn  
 Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice  
 That yet a remnant of your race survives. 340  
 How airy and how light the graceful arch,  
 Yet awful as the consecrated roof  
 Re-echoing pious anthems ! while beneath  
 The checker'd earth seems restless as a flood  
 Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light 345  
 Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,  
 Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,  
 And dark'ning, and enlight'ning, as the leaves  
 Play wanton, ev'ry moment, ev'ry spot.

And now, with nerves new brac'd and spirits cheer'd,

\* See the foregoing note.

We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks, 351  
 With curvature of slow and easy sweep—  
 Deception innocent—give ample space  
 To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next ;  
 Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms 355  
 We may discern the thresher at his task.  
 Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,  
 That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls  
 Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff,  
 The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist 360  
 Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.  
 Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,  
 And sleep not ; see him sweating o'er his bread  
 Before he eats it.— 'Tis the primal curse,  
 But soften'd into mercy ; made the pledge 365  
 Of cheerful days and nights without a groan.  
 By ceaseless action all that is subsists.  
 Constant rotation of th' unwearied wheel  
 That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,  
 Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads 370  
 An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves :  
 Its own revolvency upholds the World,  
 Winds from all quarters agitate the air,  
 And fit the limpid element for use,  
 Else noxious ; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams, 375  
 All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleans'd  
 By restless undulation : e'en the oak  
 Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm .  
 He seems indeed indignant, and to feel  
 'Th' impression of the blast with proud disdain, 380  
 Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm  
 He held the thunder : but the monarch owes  
 His firm stability to what he scorns,  
 More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.  
 The law, by which all creatures else are bound, 385  
 Binds man, the Lord of all. Himself derives  
 No mean advantage from a kindred cause,  
 From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.

The sedentary stretch their lazy length  
When Custom bids, but no refreshment find, 390  
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek  
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,  
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,  
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,  
To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves. 395  
Not such the alert and active. Measure life  
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,  
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.  
Good health, and its associate in the most,  
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake, 400  
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;  
The pow'rs of fancy and strong thought are theirs;  
E'en age itself seems privileg'd in them  
With clear exemption from its own defects.  
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front 405  
The vet'ran shows, and, gracing a gray beard  
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave  
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.  
Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,  
Furthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine 410  
Who oft'nest sacrifice are favour'd least.  
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,  
Is nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found,  
Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,  
Renounce the odours of the open field 415  
For the unscented fictions of the loom;  
Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,  
Prefer to the performance of a God  
Th' inferiour wonders of an artist's hand!  
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art; 420  
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,  
None more admires the painter's magick skill;  
Who shows me that which I shall never see,  
Conveys a distant country into mine,  
And throws Italian light on English walls: 425  
But imitative strokes can do no more

Than please the eye—sweet Nature's ev'ry sense.  
 The air salubrious of her lofty hills,  
 The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,  
 And musick of her woods—no works of man 430  
 May rival these, these all bespeak a pow'r  
 Peculiar, and exclusively her own.  
 Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;  
 'Tis free to all—'tis ev'ry day renew'd ;  
 Who scorns it starves deservedly at home. 435  
 He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long  
 In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey  
 To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank  
 And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,  
 Escapes at last to liberty and light : 440  
 His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue ;  
 His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires ;  
 He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,  
 And riots in the sweets of ev'ry breeze.  
 He does not scorn it, who has long endur'd 445  
 A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.  
 Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflam'd  
 With acrid salts ; his very heart athirst,  
 To gaze at Nature in her green array,  
 Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd 450  
 With visions prompted by intense desire ;  
 Fair fields appear below, such as he left  
 Far distant, such as he would die to find—  
 He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.  
 The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ; 455  
 The low'ring eye, the petulance, the frown,  
 And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,  
 And mar, the face of Beauty, when no cause  
 For such immeasurable wo appears,  
 These Flora banishes, and gives the fair 460  
 Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.  
 It is the constant revolution, stale  
 And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,  
 That palls and satiates, and makes languid life



A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down. 465  
 Health suffers, and the spirits ebb, the heart  
 Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast  
 Is famish'd—finds no musick in the song,  
 No smartness in the jest ; and wonders why.  
 Yet thousands still desire to journey on, 470  
 Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.  
 The paralytick, who can hold her cards,  
 But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand,  
 To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort  
 Her mingled suits and sequences ; and sits, 475  
 Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad  
 And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.  
 Others are dragg'd into a crowded room  
 Between supporters ; and, once seated, sit,  
 Through downright inability to rise, 480  
 Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.  
 These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these  
 Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he  
 That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.  
 They love it, and yet loathe it ; fear to die, 485  
 Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.  
 Then wherefore not renounce them ? No—the dread,  
 The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds  
 Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,  
 And their invet'rate habits, all forbid. 490  
 Whom call we gay ? That honour has been long  
 The boast of mere pretenders to the name.  
 The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,  
 That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,  
 Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams 495  
 Of day spring overshoot his humble nest.  
 The peasant too, a witness of his song,  
 Himself a songster, is as gay as he.  
 But save me from the gayety of those,  
 Whose headachs nail them to a noontide bed ; 500  
 And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes  
 Flash desperation, and betray their pangs



For property stripp'd off by cruel chance ;  
 From gayety, that fills the bones with pain,  
 The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with wo. 505

The earth was made so various, that the mind  
 Of desultory man, studious of change,  
 And pleas'd with novelty, might be indulg'd.  
 Prospects, however lovely, may be seen  
 Till half their beauties fade : the weary sight 510  
 Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off,  
 Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.

Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,  
 Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,  
 Delight us ; happy to renounce awhile, 515  
 Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,  
 That such short absence may endear it more.  
 Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,  
 That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts  
 Above the reach of man. His hoary head, 520

Conspicuous many a league, the mariner  
 Bound homeward, and in hope already there,  
 Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist  
 A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,  
 And at his feet the baffled billows die. 525

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough  
 With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,  
 And dang'rous to the touch, has yet its bloom,  
 And decks itself with ornaments of gold,  
 Yields no unpleasing ramble ; there the turf 530  
 Smells fresh, and, rich in odorif'rous herbs  
 And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense  
 With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days  
 Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd 535  
 With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound,  
 A serving maid was she, and fell in love  
 With one who left her, went to sea, and died.  
 Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves  
 To distant shores ; and she would sit and weep 540

At what a sailor suffers ; fancy too,  
 Delusive most where warmest wishes are,  
 Would oft anticipate his glad return,  
 And dream of transports she was not to know.  
 She heard the doleful tidings of his death— 545  
 And never smil'd again ! and now she roams  
 The dreary waste ; there spends the livelong day,  
 And there, unless when charity forbids,  
 The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,  
 Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown 550  
 More tatter'd still ; and both but ill conceal  
 A bosom heav'd with never-ceasing sighs.  
 She begs an idle pin of all she meets,  
 And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food, 554  
 Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,  
 Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is craz'd.

I see a column of slow rising smoke  
 O'ertop the lofty wood, that skirts the wild.  
 A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
 Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung 560  
 Between two poles upon a stick transverse,  
 Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,  
 Or vermin, or at best of cock purloin'd  
 From his accustom'd perch. Hard faring race !  
 They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge, 565  
 Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd  
 The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide  
 Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,  
 The vellum of the pedigree they claim.  
 Great skill have they in palmistry, and more 570  
 To conjure clean away the gold they touch,  
 Conveying worthless dross into its place ;  
 Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.  
 Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast  
 In human mould, should brutalize by choice 575  
 His nature ; and, though capable of arts,  
 By which the world might profit, and himself  
 Self-banish'd from society, prefer

Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !  
 Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft 580  
 They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,  
 And vex their flesh with artificial sores,  
 Can change their whine into a mirthful note,  
 When safe occasion offers ; and with dance,  
 And musick of the bladder and the bag, 585  
 Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.  
 Such health and gayety of heart enjoy  
 The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;  
 And, breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,  
 Need other physick none to heal th' effects 590  
 Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd  
 By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,  
 Where man by nature fierce, has laid aside  
 His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,  
 The manners and the arts of civil life. 596  
 His wants indeed are many ; but supply  
 Is obvious, plac'd within the easy reach  
 Of temp'rate wishes and industrious hands.  
 Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil ; 600  
 Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,  
 And terrible to sight, as when she springs,  
 (If e'er she spring spontaneous,) in remote  
 And barb'rous climes, where violence prevails,  
 And strength is lord of all ; but gentle, kind, 605  
 By culture tam'd, by liberty refresh'd,  
 And all her fruits by radiant truth matur'd.  
 War and the chase engross the savage whole ;  
 War follow'd for revenge or to supplant  
 The envied tenants of some happier spot : 610  
 The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !  
 His hard condition with severe constraint  
 Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth  
 Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns  
 Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate, 615  
 Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.

Thus fare the shiv'ring natives of the north,  
 And thus the rangers of the western world,  
 Where it advances far into the deep,  
 Tow'rd's the antarctick. E'en the favour'd isles 620  
 So lately found, although the constant sun  
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,  
 Can boast but little virtue ; and inert  
 'Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain  
 In manners—victims of luxurious ease. 625  
 These therefore I can pity, plac'd remote  
 From all that science traces, art invents,  
 Or inspiration teaches ; and enclos'd  
 In boundless oceans never to be pass'd  
 By navigators uninform'd as they, 630  
 Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again .  
 But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,  
 Thee, gentle savage !\* whom no love of thee  
 Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,  
 Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw 635  
 Forth from thy native bow'rs, to show thee here  
 With what superiour skill we can abuse  
 The gifts of Providence, and squander life.  
 The dream is past ; and thou hast found again  
 Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams, 640  
 And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou  
                     found  
 Their former charms ? And, having seen our state,  
 Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp  
 Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,  
 And heard our musick ; are thy simple friends, 645  
 Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,  
 As dear to thee as once ? And have thy joys  
 Lost nothing by comparison with ours ?  
 Rude as thou art, (for we return'd thee rude  
 And ignorant, except of outward show,) 650  
 I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart  
 And spiritless, as never to regret

Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.  
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,  
And asking of the surge, that bathes thy foot, 655  
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.  
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,  
A patriot's for his country : thou art sad  
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,  
From which no pow'r of thine can raise her up. 660  
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,  
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.  
She tells me too, that duly ev'ry morn  
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye  
Exploring far and wide the wat'ry waste 665  
For sight of ship from England. Ev'ry speck  
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale  
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.  
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,  
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepar'd 670  
To dream all night of what the day denied.  
Alas ! expect it not. We found no bait  
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,  
Disinterested good, is not our trade.  
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought ; 675  
And must be brib'd to compass Earth again  
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.  
But though true worth and virtue in the mild  
And genial soil of cultivated life  
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there, 680  
Yet not in cities oft : in proud, and gay,  
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,  
As to a common and most noisome sewer,  
The dregs and feculence of every land.  
In cities, foul example on most minds 685  
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,  
In gross and pamper'd cities, sloth, and lust,  
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.  
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,  
Or seen with least reproach ; and virtue, taught 690

By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there  
 Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.  
 I do confess them nurseries of the arts,  
 In which they flourish most ; where in the beams  
 Of warm encouragement, and in the eye 695  
 Of publick note, they reach their perfect size.  
 Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd  
 The fairest capital of all the world,  
 By riot and incontinence the worst.  
 There touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes 700  
 A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees  
 All her reflected features. Bacon there  
 Gives more than female beauty to a stone,  
 And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.  
 Nor does the chisel occupy alone 705  
 The pow'rs of sculpture, but the style as much ;  
 Each province of her art her equal care.  
 With nice incision of her guided steel  
 She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil  
 So sterile with what charms soe'er she will, 710  
 The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.  
 Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,  
 With which she gazes at yon burning disk  
 Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots ?  
 In London. Where her implements exact, 715  
 With which she calculates, computes, and scans,  
 All distance, motion, magnitude, and now  
 Measures an atom, and now girds a world ?  
 In London. Where has commerce such a mart,  
 So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied, 720  
 As London—opulent, enlarg'd, and still  
 Increasing London ? Babylon of old  
 Not more the glory of the Earth, than she,  
 A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.  
 She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two, 725  
 That so much beauty would do well to purge ;  
 And show this queen of cities, that so fair,  
 May yet be foul ; so witty. yet not wise.

It is not seemly, nor of good report,  
That she is slack in discipline ; more prompt 730  
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law :  
That she is rigid in denouncing death  
On petty robbers, and indulges life,  
And liberty, and oftentimes honour too,  
To peculators of the public gold : 735  
That thieves at home must hang ; but he that puts  
Into his overgorg'd and bloated purse  
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.  
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,  
That, through profane and infidel contempt 740  
Of holy writ, she has presum'd t' annul  
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,  
The total ordinance and will of God ;  
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,  
And centring all authority in modes 745  
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites  
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,  
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorc'd.

God made the country, and man made the town.  
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts 750  
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught  
That life holds out to all, should most abound  
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves ?  
Possess ye, therefore, ye who, borne about  
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue 755  
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes  
But such as art contrives, possess ye still  
Your element, there only can ye shine ;  
There only minds like yours can do no harm.  
Our groves were planted to console at noon 760  
The pensive wand'rer in their shades. At eve  
The moon-beam, sliding softly in between  
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,  
Birds warbling all the musick. We can spare  
The splendour of your lamps ; they but eclipse 765  
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound

Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs.  
Scar'd, and th' offended nightingale is mute.  
There is a publick mischief in your mirth;  
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours, 770  
Grac'd with a sword, and worthier of a fan,  
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,  
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,  
A mutilated structure soon to fall.



# THE TASK.

## BOOK II.

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### THE TIME-PIECE.

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#### ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow—Prodigies enumerated—Sicilian earthquakes—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin—God the agent in them—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reprov'd—Our own late miscarriages accounted for—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainebleau—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons—Petit-maitre parson—The good preacher—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reprov'd—Apostrophe to popular applause—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with—Sum of the whole matter—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity—Their folly and extravagance—The mischiefs of profusion—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

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O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
Of unsuccessful or successful war,  
Might never reach me more ! My ear is pain'd,                   5  
My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report  
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart ;  
It does not feel for man ; the natural bond  
Of brotherhood is sever'd, as the flax,                   10

That falls asunder at the touch of fire.  
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
Not colour'd like his own ; and having pow'r  
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause  
Dooms and devotes him as a lawful prey. 15  
Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd  
Make enemies of nations, who had else  
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.  
'Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ; 20  
And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd,  
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart,  
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast. 25  
Then what is man ? And what man, seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush,  
And hang his head, to think himself a man ?  
I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
'To carry me, to fan me while I sleep, 30  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd  
No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
Just estimation priz'd above all price,  
I had much rather be myself the slave, 35  
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.  
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad ?  
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave  
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.  
Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs 40  
Receive our air, that moment they are free ;  
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.  
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,  
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein 45  
Of all your empire : that, where Britain's pow'r  
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social intercourse,

Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,  
 Between the nations, in a world that seems 50  
 To toll the death-bell of its own decease,  
 And by the voice of all its elements  
 To preach the gen'ral doom.\* When were the winds  
 Let slip with such a warrant to destroy ?  
 When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap 55  
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry ?  
 Fires from beneath, and meteor† from above,  
 Portentous, unexampled, unexplain'd,  
 Have kindled beacons in the skies ; and th' old  
 And crazy Earth has had her shaking fits 60  
 More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.  
 Is it a time to wrangle, when the props  
 And pillars of our planet seem to fail,  
 And Nature with a dim and sickly eye‡  
 To wait the close of all ? But grant her end 65  
 More distant, and that prophecy demands  
 A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet ;  
 Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak  
 Displeasure in his breast who smites the Earth  
 Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice. 70  
 And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve  
 And stand expos'd by common peccancy  
 To what no few have felt, there should be peace,  
 And brethren in calamity should love.

Alas for Sicily ! rude fragments now 75  
 Lie scatter'd, where the shapely columns stood.  
 Her palaces are dust. In all her streets  
 The voice of singing and the sprightly chord  
 Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,  
 Suffer a syncope and solemn pause ; 80  
 While God performs upon the trembling stage  
 Of his own works his dreadful part alone.  
 How does the earth receive him ? with what signs

\* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

† August, 18, 1783.

‡ Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Of gratulation and delight her king?  
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad, 85  
Her sweetest flow'rs, her aromattick gums,  
Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads?  
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,  
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps  
And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot. 90  
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,  
For he has touch'd them. From th' extremest point  
Of elevation down into the abyss  
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.  
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise, 95  
The rivers die into offensive pools,  
And, charg'd with putrid verdure, breathe a gross  
And mortal nuisance into all the air.  
What solid was, by transformation strange,  
Grows fluid; and the fix'd and rooted earth, 100  
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,  
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl  
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense  
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs  
And agonies of human and of brute 105  
Multitudes, fugitive on ev'ry side,  
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene  
Migrates uplifted: and, with all its soil  
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out  
A new possessor, and survives the change. 110  
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and, upwrought  
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,  
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice  
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore  
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood, 115  
Upridg'd so high, and sent on such a charge,  
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng  
That press'd the beach, and, hasty to depart,  
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,  
Gone with the reflux wave into the deep— 120  
A prince with half his people! Ancient tow'rs,

And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes  
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume  
Life in the unproductive shades of death,  
Fall prone : the pale inhabitants come forth, 125  
And, happy in their unforeseen release  
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy  
The terrors of the day that sets them free.  
Who, then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,  
Freedom ! whom they that lose thee so regret, 130  
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,  
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake ?  
Such evil Sin hath wrought ; and such a flame  
Kindled in Heav'n, that it burns down to Earth,  
And in the furious inquest that it makes 135  
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.  
The very elements, though each be meant  
The minister of man, to serve his wants,  
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws  
A plague into his blood ; and cannot use 140  
Life's necessary means, but he must die.  
Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him ; or if stormy winds  
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,  
And, needing none assistance of the storm,  
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there. 145  
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,  
Or make his house his grave : nor so content,  
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,  
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.  
What then !—were they the wicked above all, 150  
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle  
Mov'd not, while theirs was rock'd, like a light skiff,  
The sport of every wave ? No ; none are clear,  
And none than we more guilty. But, where all  
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts 155  
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark :  
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn  
The more malignant. If he spar'd not them,

Tremble and be amaz'd at thine escape,  
 Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee ! 160  
 Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd  
 In all the good and ill that checker life !  
 Resolving all events, with their effects  
 And manifold results, into the will  
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme. 165  
 Did not his eye rule all things, and intend  
 The least of our concerns ; (since from the least  
 The greatest oft originate ;) could chance  
 Find place in his dominion, or dispose  
 One lawless particle to thwart his plan ; 170  
 'Then God might be surpris'd, and unforeseen  
 Contingence might alarm him, and disturb  
 The smooth and equal course of his affairs.  
 'This truth Philosophy, though eagle-ey'd  
 In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks ; 175  
 And, having found his instrument, forgets,  
 Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,  
 Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims  
 His hot displeasure against foolish men,  
 'That live an atheist life ; involves the Heavens 180  
 In tempests ; quits his grasp upon the winds,  
 And gives them all their fury ; bids a plague  
 Kindle a fiery bile upon the skin,  
 And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.  
 He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend 185  
 Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,  
 And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,  
 And desolates a nation at a blast.  
 Forth steps the spruce Philosopher, and tells  
 Of homogeneal and discordant springs, 190  
 And principles ; of causes how they work  
 By necessary laws their sure effects  
 Of action and reaction : he has found  
 'The source of the disease that nature feels,  
 And bids the world take heart and banish fear. 195

Thou fool ? will thy discov'ry of the cause  
Suspend th' effect, or heal it ? Has not God  
Still wrought by means since first he made the world ?  
And did he not of old employ his means  
To drown it ? What is his creation less, 200  
Than a capacious reservoir of means,  
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will ?  
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve ; ask of Him,  
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught ;  
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all. 205

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
My country ! and, while yet a nook is left,  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd 210  
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,  
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,  
And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France  
With all her vines : nor for Ausonia's groves  
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bow'rs. 215  
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :  
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart 220  
As any thund'rer there. And I can feel  
Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain  
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks  
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.

How in the name of soldiership and sense, 225  
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth  
And tender as a girl, all essenc'd o'er  
With odours, and as profligate as sweet ;  
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
And love when they should fight : when such as these  
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark 231  
Of her magnificent and awful cause ?  
Time was when it was praise and boast enough



In every clime, and travel where we might,  
 That we were born her children. Praise enough 235  
 To fill th' ambition of a private man  
 That Chatham's language was his mother-tongue,  
 And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
 Farewell those honours, and farewell with them  
 The hope of such hereafter ! They have fall'n 240  
 Each in his field of glory ; one in arms,  
 And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap  
 Of smiling Victory that moment won,  
 And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame !  
 They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still 245  
 Consulting England's happiness at home,  
 Secur'd it by an unforgiving frown,  
 If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,  
 Put so much of his heart into his act,  
 That his example had a magnet's force, 250  
 And all were swift to follow whom all lov'd.  
 Those suns are set. O rise some other such ?  
 Or all that we have left is empty talk  
 Of old achievements and despair of new.  
 Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float 255  
 Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck  
 With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,  
 That no rude savour maritime invade  
 The nose of nice nobility ! Breathe soft,  
 Ye clarionets ; and softer still, ye flutes ; 260  
 'That winds and waters, lull'd by magick sounds,  
 May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.  
 True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.  
 True, we may thank the perfidy of France,  
 That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown, 265  
 With all the cunning of an envious shrew.  
 And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state—  
 A brave man knows no malice, but at once  
 Forgets in peace the injuries of war,  
 And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace. 270  
 And sham'd as we have been, to th' very beard



Brav'd and defied, and in our own sea prov'd  
 Too weak for those decisive blows that once  
 Ensur'd us mast'ry there, we yet retain  
 Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast 275  
 At least superiour jockeyship, and claim  
 The honours of the turf as all our own !  
 Go, then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,  
 And show the shame ye might conceal at home,  
 In foreign eyes !—be grooms and win the plate, 280  
 Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—  
 'Tis gen'rous to communicate your skill  
 To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd :  
 And under such preceptors who can fail ?  
 There is a pleasure in poetick pains, 285  
 Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,  
 Th' expedients and inventions multiform,  
 To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms,  
 Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—  
 T' arrest the fleeting images, that fill 290  
 The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,  
 And force them sit, till he has pencil'd off  
 A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;  
 Then to dispose his copies with such art,  
 That each may find its most propitious light, 295  
 And shine by situation, hardly less  
 Than by the labour and the skill it cost ;  
 Arc occupations of the poet's mind  
 So pleasing, and that steal away the thought,  
 With such address from themes of sad import, 300  
 That, lost in his own musings, happy man !  
 He feels the anxieties of life denied  
 Their wonted entertainment ; all retire.  
 Such joys has he that sings. But ah ! not such,  
 Or seldom such, the hearers of his song. 305  
 Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps  
 Aware of nothing arduous in a task  
 They never undertook, they little note  
 His dangers or escapes, and haply find

Their least amusement where he found the most. 310  
But is amusement all? Studios of song,  
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,  
I would not trifle merely, though the world  
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.  
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay? 315  
It may correct a foible, may chastise  
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,  
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;  
But where are its sublimer trophies found?  
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd 320  
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?  
Alas! Leviathan is not so tam'd:  
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,  
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,  
That fear no discipline of human hands. 325  
The pulpit, therefore—(and I name it fill'd  
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware  
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—  
The pulpit—(when the sat'rist has at last,  
Strutting and vap'ring in an empty school, 330  
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—  
I say the pulpit (in the sober use  
Of its legitimate peculiar pow'rs)  
Must stand acknowledg'd, while the world shall stand,  
The most important and effectual guard, 335  
Support, and ornament, of Virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth; there stands  
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.  
By him the violated law speaks out 340  
Its thunders: and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.  
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,  
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete 345  
Of heav'nly temper, furnishes with arms  
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule

Of holy discipline, to glorious war  
 The sacramental host of God's elect : 349  
 Are all such teachers ?—would to Heav'n all were !  
 But hark—the doctor's voice !—fast wedg'd between  
 Two empiricks he stands, and with swoln cheeks  
 Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far  
 Than all invective is his bold harangue,  
 While through that publick organ of report 355  
 He hails the clergy ; and, defying shame,  
 Announces to the world his own and theirs !  
 He teaches those to read whom schools dismiss'd,  
 And colleges, untaught : sells accent, tone,  
 And emphasis in score, and gives to pray'r 360  
 Th' *adagio* and *andante* it demands.  
 He grinds divinity of other days  
 Down into modern use ; transforms old print  
 To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes  
 Of gall'ry critics by a thousand arts. 365  
 Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware ?  
 O, name it not in Gath !—it cannot be,  
 That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.  
 He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,  
 Assuming thus a rank unknown before— 370  
 Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church !  
 I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,  
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,  
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
 That he is honest in the sacred cause. 375  
 To such I render more than mere respect,  
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.  
 But loose in morals and in manners vain,  
 In conversation frivolous, in dress  
 Extreme at once rapacious and profuse ; 380  
 Frequent in park with lady at his side,  
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes ;  
 But rare at home, and never at his books,  
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;  
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round 385

Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;  
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,  
 And well prepar'd, by ignorance and sloth,  
 By infidelity and love of world,  
 To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave 390  
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride ;  
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
 Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands  
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul, 395  
 Were he on Earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
 His master-strokes, and draw from his design.  
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;  
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain, 400  
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And natural in gesture ; much impress'd  
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
 May feel it too ; affectionate in look, 405  
 And tender in address, as well becomes  
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.  
 Behold the picture !—Is it like ?—Like whom ?  
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
 And then skip down again ; pronounce a text ; 410  
 Cry—hem ; and, reading what they never wrote  
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,  
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !

In man or woman, but far most in man,  
 And most of all in man that ministers 415  
 And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe  
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;  
 Object of my implacable disgust.  
 What !—will a man play tricks—will he indulge  
 A silly fond conceit of his fair form, 420  
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,  
 And pretty face, in presence of his God ?  
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,

As with the diamond on his lily hand,  
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes, 425  
When I am hungry for the bread of life ?  
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames  
His noble office, and, instead of truth,  
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.  
Therefore avaunt all attitude and stare, 430  
And start theatrick, practis'd at the glass !  
I seek divine simplicity in him  
Who handles things divine ; and all besides,  
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd  
By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform'd, 435  
To me is odious as the nasal twang  
Heard at conventicle where worthy men,  
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes  
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrid.  
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach, 440  
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves ;  
And, having spoken wisely, at the close  
Grow wanton, and give proof to ev'ry eye,  
Whoe'er was edify'd, themselves were not !  
Forth comes the pocket-mirror. First we stroke 445  
An eyebrow ; next compose a straggling lock ;  
Then with an air most gracefully perform'd,  
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,  
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,  
With handkerchief in hand depending low ; 450  
The better hand more busy gives the nose  
Its bergamot, or aids th' indebted eye  
With op'ra glass, to watch the moving scene,  
And recognise the slow retiring fair.—  
Now this is fulsome ; and offends me more 455  
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect  
And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind  
May be indiff'rent to her house of clay,  
And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;  
But how a body so fantastic, trim, 460

And quaint, in its deportment and attire,  
Can lodge a heav'nly mind—demands a doubt.

He that negotiates between God and man,  
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns  
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware 465  
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful

To court a grin, when you should woo a soul :  
To break a jest, when pity would inspire  
Pathetick exhortation ; and t' address  
The skittish fancy with facetious tales, 470

When sent with God's commission to the heart !  
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip  
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,  
And I consent you take it for your text,

Your only one, till sides and benches fail. 475  
No : he was serious in a serious cause,

And understood too well the weighty terms,  
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop  
To conquer those by joecular exploits,  
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain. 480

O Popular Applause ! what heart of man  
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms ?  
The wisest and the best feel urgent need  
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales ;  
But swell'd into a gust—who, then, alas ! 485

With all his canvass set, and inexpert,  
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy pow'r ?  
Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald  
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean

And craving Poverty, and in the bow 490  
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,

Is oft too welcome and may much disturb  
The bias of the purpose. How much more,  
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,  
In language soft as Adoration breathes ? 495

Ah, spare your idol, think him human still.  
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too !  
Dote not too much nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source  
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome, 500  
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we  
Drink when we choose it, at the fountain head.  
To them it flow'd much mingled and defil'd  
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams  
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd, 505  
But falsely. Sages after sages strove  
In vain to filter off a crystal draught  
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanc'd  
The thirst than slak'd it, and not seldom bred  
Intoxication and delirium wild. 510  
In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth  
And spring-time of the world; ask'd, Whence is man?  
Why form'd at all? and wherefore as he is?  
Where must he find his maker? with what rites  
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless? 515  
Or does he sit regardless of his works?  
Has man within him an immortal seed?  
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive  
His ashes, where? and in what weal or wo?  
Knots worthy of solution, which alone 520  
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague  
And all at random, fabulous and dark,  
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life  
Defective and unsanction'd, prov'd too weak  
To bind the roving appetite, and lead 525  
Blind nature to a God not yet reveal'd.  
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,  
Explains all mysteries, except her own,  
And so illuminates the path of life  
That fools discover it, and stray no more. 530  
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,  
My man of morals, nurtur'd in the shades  
Of Academus—is this false or true?  
Is Christ the abler teacher or the schools  
If Christ, then why resort at ev'ry turn 535  
To Athens, or to Rome, for wisdom shore



Of man's occasions, when in him reside  
 Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathom'd store?  
 How oft, when Paul has serv'd us with a text,  
 Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd! 540  
 Men that, if now alive, would sit content  
 And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,  
 Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,  
 Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.

And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain 545  
 By nature, or by flatt'ry made so, taught  
 To gaze at his own splendour, and t' exalt  
 Absurdly, not his office, but himself;  
 Or unenlighten'd and too proud to learn;  
 Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach; 550  
 Perverting often by the stress of lewd  
 And loose example, whom he should instruct;  
 Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,  
 'The noblest function, and discredits much  
 'The brightest truths that man has ever seen. 555  
 For ghostly counsel; if it either fall  
 Below the exigence, or be not back'd  
 With show of love, at least with hopeful proof  
 Of some sincerity on the giver's part;  
 Or be dishonour'd in th' exteriour form 560  
 And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks  
 As move derision, or by foppish airs  
 And histrionick mum'm'ry that let down  
 The pulpit to the level of the stage;  
 Drops from the lips a disregarded thing. 565

The weak perhaps are mov'd, but are not taught  
 While prejudice in men of stronger minds  
 Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.  
 A relaxation of religion's hold  
 Upon the roving and untutor'd heart 570  
 Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapp'd  
 The laity run wild. But do they now?  
 Note their extravagance, and be convinc'd.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive



A wooden one : so we, no longer taught  
By monitors, that mother church supplies,  
Now make our own. Posterity will ask,  
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine,) 575  
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,  
What was a monitor in George's days ? 580  
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,  
Of whom I needs must augur better things,  
Since Heav'n would sure grow weary of a world  
Productive only of a race like ours,  
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin. 585  
We wear it at our backs. There, closely brac'd  
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard  
The prominent and most unsightly bones,  
And binds the shoulder flat. We prove its use  
Sov'reign and most effectual to secure 590  
A form, not now gymnastick as of yore,  
From rickets, and distortion, else our lot.  
But thus admonish'd, we can walk erect—  
One proof at least of manhood ! while the friend  
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge. 595  
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,  
And by caprice as multiplied as his,  
Just please us while the fashion is at full,  
But change with ev'ry moon. The sycophant,  
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date ; 600  
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye ;  
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,  
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceiv'd ;  
And, making prize of all that he condemns,  
With our expenditure defrays his own. 605  
Variety's the very spice of life,  
That gives it all its flavour. We have run  
Through ev'ry change, that Fancy at the loom  
Exhausted, has had genius to supply ;  
And studious of mutation still, discard 610  
A real elegance, a little us'd,  
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.

We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
And keeps our larder lean ; puts out our fires ; 615  
And introduces hunger, frost, and wo,  
Where peace and hospitality might reign.  
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,  
Would fail t' exhibit at the publick shows  
A form as splendid as the proudest there, 620  
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost ?  
A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough,  
With reasonable forecast and despatch,  
T' ensure a side-box station at half price.  
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress, 625  
His daily fare as delicate Alas !  
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems  
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet !  
The rout is Folly's circle, which she draws  
With magick wand. So potent is the spell, 630  
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,  
Unless by Heav'n's peculiar grace, escape.  
There we grow early gray, but never wise ;  
There form connexions, but acquire no friend ;  
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success ; 635  
Waste youth in occupations only fit  
For second childhood, and devote old age  
To sports, which only childhood could excuse.  
There, they are happiest who dissemble best  
Their weariness ; and they the most polite 640  
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,  
Though at their own destruction. She that asks  
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,  
And hates their coming. They (what can they less ?)  
Make just reprisals ; and with cringe and shrug, 645  
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.  
All catch the frenzy, downward from her grace,  
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,  
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,  
To her, who, frugal only that her thrift 650

May feed excesses she can ill afford,  
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd ; who, in haste  
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,  
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,  
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left. 655

Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,  
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up  
Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe  
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far  
Than all that held their routs in Juno's Heav'n.— 660  
So fare we in this prison-house, the World ;  
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.  
They gaze upon the links, that hold them fast,  
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot, 665  
Then shake them in despair, and dance again !

Now basket up the family of plagues,  
That waste our vitals ; peculation, sale  
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds  
By forgery, by subterfuge of law, 670  
By tricks and lies as num'rous and as keen  
As the necessities their authors feel :  
Then cast them, closely bundled, ev'ry brat  
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.  
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base 675  
In character, has litter'd all the land,  
And bred, within the mem'ry of no few,  
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,  
A people, such as never was till now.

It is a hungry vice :—it eats up all 680  
That gives society its beauty, strength,  
Convenience, security, and use :  
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd  
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws  
Can seize the slippery prey : unties the knot 685  
Of union, and converts the sacred band  
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.  
Profusion deluging a state with lusts

Of grossest nature and of worst effects,  
 Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds, 690  
 And warps, the consciences of publick men,  
 'Till they can laugh at Virtue ; mock the fools  
 That trust them ; and in th' end disclose a face,  
 That would have shock'd Credulity herself.  
 Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse— 695  
 Since all alike are selfish, why not they ?  
 This does Profusion, and th' accursed cause  
 Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls in ancient days,  
 When learning, virtue, piety, and truth, 700  
 Were precious and inculcated with care,  
 There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head,  
 Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,  
 Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,  
 But strong for service still, and unimpair'd. 705  
 His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile  
 Play'd on his lips ; and in his speech was heard  
 Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.  
 The occupation dearest to his heart  
 Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke 710  
 The head of modest and ingenious worth,  
 That blush'd at his own praise : and press the youth  
 Close to his side that pleas'd him. Learning grew  
 Beneath his care, a thriving vig'rous plant ;  
 The mind was well informed, the passions held 715  
 Subordinate, and diligence was choice.  
 If e'er it chanc'd, as sometimes chance it must,  
 That one among so many overleap'd  
 The limits of control, his gentle eye  
 Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke ; 720  
 His frown was full of terrour, and his voice  
 Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,  
 As left him not, till penitence had won  
 Lost favour back again, and clos'd the breach.  
 But Discipline, a faithful servant long, 725  
 Declin'd at length into the vale of years .

A palsy struck his arm ; his sparkling eye  
 Was quenched in rheums of age ; his voice, unstrung,  
 Grew tremulous, and mov'd derision more  
 Than rev'rence, in perverse rebellious youth. 730  
 So colleges and halls neglected much  
 Their good old friend ; and Discipline at length,  
 O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.  
 Then Study languished, Emulation slept,  
 And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene 735  
 Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,  
 His cap well lin'd with logick not his own,  
 With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,  
 Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.  
 Then compromise had place, and scrutiny 740  
 Became stone blind ; precedence went in truck,  
 And he was competent whose purse was so.  
 A dissolution of all bonds ensued ;  
 The curbs invented for the mulish mouth  
 Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts 745  
 Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates  
 Forgot their office, op'ning with a touch ;  
 Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade,  
 The tassel'd cap and the spruce band a jest,  
 A mock'ry of the world ! What need of these 750  
 For gamesters, jockeys, brothelers impure,  
 Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oft'ner seen  
 With belted waist and pointers at their heels,  
 Than in the bounds of duty ? What was learn'd,  
 If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot : 755  
 And such expense, as pinches parents blue,  
 And mortifies the lib'ral hand of love,  
 Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports  
 And vicious pleasures ; buys the boy a name  
 That sits a stigma on his father's house, 760  
 And cleaves through life inseparably close  
 To him that wears it. What can after games  
 Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,

The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,  
 Add to such erudition, thus acquired, 765  
 Where science and where virtue are professed?  
 They may confirm his habits, rivet fast  
 His folly, but to spoil him is a task  
 That bids defiance to th' united powers  
 Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews. 770  
 Now blame we most the nurselings or the nurse?  
 The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd,  
 Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye  
 And slumb'ring oscitancy mars the brood?  
 The nurse, no doubt. Regardless of her charge, 775  
 She needs herself correction; needs to learn  
 That it is dang'rous sporting with the world,  
 With things so sacred as a nation's trust,  
 The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.  
 All are not such. I had a brother once— 780  
 Peace to the memory of a man of worth,  
 A man of letters, and of manners too!  
 Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,  
 When gay good-natured dresses her in smiles.  
 He grac'd a college,\* in which order yet 785  
 Was sacred; and was honour'd, lov'd, and wept  
 By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.  
 Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd  
 With such ingredients of good sense, and taste  
 Of what is excellent in man, they thirst 790  
 With such a zeal to be what they approve,  
 That no restraints can circumscribe them more  
 Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.  
 Nor can example hurt them; what they see  
 Of vice in others but enhancing more 795  
 The charms of virtue in their just esteem.  
 If such escape contagion, and emerge  
 Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,  
 And give the world their talents and themselves,

Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth 800  
Expos'd their inexperience to the snare,  
And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decay'd,  
In which are kept our arrows ! Rusting there  
In wild disorder, and unfit for use, 805  
What wonder, if discharg'd into the world,  
They shame their shooters with a random flight,  
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine !  
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war  
With such artill'ry arm'd. Vice parries wide 810  
Th' undreaded volley with a sword of straw,  
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not track'd the felon home, and found  
His birthplace and his dam ? The country mourns,  
Mourns because ev'ry plague that can infest 815  
Society, and that saps and worms the base  
Of th' edifice that policy has rais'd,  
Swarms in all quarters : meets the eye, the ear,  
And suffocates the breath at ev'ry turn.  
Profusion breeds them ; and the cause itself 820  
Of that calamitous mischief has been found :  
Found, too, where most offensive, in the skirts  
Of the rob'd pedagogue ! Else let th' arraign'd  
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.  
So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm, 825  
And wav'd his rod divine, a race obscene,  
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,  
Polluting Egypt : gardens, fields, and plains,  
Were cover'd with the pest ; the streets were fill'd ;  
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in ev'ry nook ; 830  
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scap'd ;  
And the land stank—so num'rous was the fry.



# THE TASK.

## BOOK III.

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### THE GARDEN.

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#### ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection, and reproof—Address to domestick happiness—Some account of myself—The vanity of many of their pursuits, who are reputed wise—Justification of my censures—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions—Domestick happiness addressed again—Few lovers of the country—My tame hare—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden—Pruning—Framing—Greenhouse—Sowing of flower seeds—The country preferable to the town even in the winter—Reasons why it is deserted at that season—Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvement—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

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AS one, who long in thickets and in brakes  
Entangled, winds now this way and now that  
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;  
Or, having long in miry ways been foil'd  
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough 5  
Plunging, and half despairing of escape;  
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth  
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease! 10  
So I, designing other themes, and call'd  
T' adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,



To tell its slumbers, and to paint its dreams,  
 Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat  
 Of academick fame, (howe'er deserv'd,) 15  
 Long held, and scarcely disengag'd at last :  
 But now with pleasant pace a cleaner road  
 I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,  
 Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,  
 If toil await me, or if dangers new. 20

Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect  
 Most part an empty ineffectual sound,  
 What chance that I, to fame so little known,  
 Nor conversant with men or manners much,  
 Should speak to purpose, or with better hope 25  
 Crack the satirick thong ? 'Twere wiser far  
 For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,  
 And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose  
 Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,  
 My languid limbs ; when summer sears the plains ; 30  
 Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft  
 And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air  
 Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth ;  
 There, undisturb'd by Folly, and appriz'd  
 How great the danger of disturbing her, 35  
 To muse in silence, or at least confine  
 Remarks, that gall so many, to the few  
 My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd  
 Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault  
 Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach. 40

Domestick happiness, thou only bliss  
 Of Paradise, that has surviv'd the fall !  
 Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,  
 Or tasting, long enjoy thee ! too infirm,  
 Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets 45  
 Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect  
 Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup ;  
 Thou art the nurse of Virtue—in thine arms  
 She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
 Heav'n-born, and destin'd to the skies again. 50

Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador'd,  
 That reeling goddess, with the zoneless waist  
 And wand'ring eyes, still leaning on the arm  
 Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support ;  
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change, 55  
 And finding in the calm of truth-tried love,  
 Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.  
 Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made  
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown !  
 Till prostitution elbows us aside 60  
 In all our crowded streets ; and senates seem  
 Conven'd for purposes of empire less  
 Than to release the adult'ress from her bond.  
 Th' adult'ress ! what a theme for angry verse !  
 What provocation to th' indignant heart, 65  
 That feels for injur'd love ! but I disdain  
 The nauseous task to paint her as she is,  
 Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame ?  
 No :—let her pass, and, charioted along  
 In guilty splendour, shake the publick ways ; 70  
 The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white,  
 And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,  
 Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd  
 And chaste themselves, are not asham'd to own.  
 Virtue and vice had bound'ries in old time, 75  
 Not to be pass'd : and she that had renounced  
 Her sex's honour, was renounc'd herself  
 By all that priz'd it ; not for prud'ry's sake  
 But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.  
 'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif, 80  
 Desirous to return and not receiv'd :  
 But was a wholesome rigour in the main,  
 And taught th' unblemish'd to preserve with care  
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.  
 Men too were nice in honour in those days, 85  
 And judg'd offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,  
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,  
 Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold

His country, or was slack when she requir'd  
 His ev'ry nerve in action and at stretch, 90  
 Paid with the blood that he had basely spar'd  
 The price of his default. But now—yes, now  
 We are become so candid and so fair  
 So lib'ral in construction, and so rich  
 In christian charity, (good natur'd age !) 95  
 That they are safe ; sinners of either sex  
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well  
 bred,

Well equipag'd, is ticket good enough,  
 To pass as readily through ev'ry door.  
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may, 100  
 (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,  
 May claim this merit still—that she admits  
 The worth of what she mimicks, with such care,  
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause ;  
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here, 105  
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts  
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew 110  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by one who had himself  
 Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,  
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
 With gentle force soliciting the darts, 115  
 He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.  
 Since then, with few associates, in remote  
 And silent woods I wander, far from those  
 My former partners of the peopled scene ;  
 With few associates, and not wishing more. 120  
 Here much I ruminate, as much I may,  
 With other views of men and manners now  
 Than once, and others of a life to come :  
 I see that all are wand'ers, gone astray  
 Each in his own delusions ; they are lost 125

In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd  
And never won. Dream after dream ensues ;  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
With the vain stir. I sum up half' mankind 130  
And add two thirds of the remaining half,  
And find the total of their hopes and fears  
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay,  
As if created only like the fly,  
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon, 135  
To sport their season, and be seen no more.  
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.  
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats  
Of heroes little known ; and call the rant 140  
A history : describe the man, of whom  
His own coevals took but little note,  
And paint his person, character, and views,  
As they had known him from his mother's womb.  
They disentangle from the puzzled skein, 145  
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,  
The threads of politick and shrewd design,  
That ran through all his purposes, and charge  
His mind with meanings that he never had,  
Or, having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore 150  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn,  
That he who made it and reveal'd its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.  
Some, more acute, and more industrious still, 155  
Contrive creation ; travel nature up  
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,  
And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd,  
And planetary some ; what gave them first  
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light. 160  
Great contest follows, and much learned dust  
Involves the combatants ; each claiming truth,  
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend

The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp  
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws 165  
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.  
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums  
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight  
Of oracles like these ? Great pity, too,  
That having wielded th' elements, and built 170  
A thousand systems, each in his own way,  
They should go out in fume, and be forgot !  
Ah ! what is life thus spent ? and what are they  
But frantick, who thus spend it ? all for smoke—  
Eternity for bubbles, proves at last 175  
A senseless bargain. When I see such games  
Play'd by the creatures of a pow'r who swears  
That he will judge the Earth, and call the fool  
To a sharp reck'ning, that has liv'd in vain ;  
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well, 180  
And prove it in th' infallible result  
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart  
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,  
If this be learning, most of all deceiv'd.  
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps, 185  
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.  
Defend me, therefore, common sense, say I,  
From reveries so airy, from the toil  
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up ! 190  
'Twere well, says one, sage, erudite, profound  
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,  
And overbuilt with most impending brows,  
'Twere well, could you permit the World to live  
As the world pleases : what's the World to you ? 195  
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk  
As sweet as charity from human breasts.  
I think, articulate—I laugh and weep,  
And exercise all functions of a man.  
How then should I and any man that lives 200  
Be strangers to each other ? Pierce my vein,

Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,  
And catechise it well : apply thy glass,  
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood  
Congenial with thine own : and, if it be, 205  
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose  
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,  
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
One common Maker bound me to the kind ?  
True ; I am no proficient, I confess, 210  
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift  
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,  
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath ;  
I cannot analyze the air, nor catch  
The parallax of yonder luminous point, 215  
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss :  
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest  
A silent witness of the headlong rage,  
Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,  
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine. 220

God never meant that man should scale the Heav'ns  
By strides of human wisdom. In his works,  
Though wondrous, he commands us in his word  
To seek *him* rather where his mercy shines.  
The mind, indeed, enlighten'd from above, 225  
Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause  
The grand effect ; acknowledges with joy  
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.  
But never yet did philosophick tube,  
That brings the planets home into the eye 230  
Of observation, and discovers, else  
Not visible, his family of worlds,  
Discover him that rules them ; such a veil  
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
And dark in things divine. Full often too, 235  
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn  
Of nature, overlooks her author more ;  
From instrumental causes proud to draw  
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.

But if his word once teach us—shoot a ray 240  
 Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal  
 Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light ;  
 Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptiz'd  
 In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
 Has eyes indeed ; and viewing all she sees 245  
 As meant to indicate a God to man,  
 Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.  
 Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
 On all her branches : piety has found  
 Friends in the friends of science, and true pray'r 250  
 Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dew.  
 Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage !  
 Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
 And in his word sagacious. Such, too, thine,  
 Milton, whose genius had angelick wings, 255  
 And fed on manna ! And such thine, in whom  
 Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
 Immortal Hale ! for deep discernment prais'd,  
 And sound integrity, not more than fam'd  
 For sanctity of manners undefil'd. 260

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades  
 Like the fair flow'r dishevell'd in the wind ;  
 Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream ;  
 The man we celebrate must find a tomb,  
 And we that worship him, ignoble graves. 265  
 Nothing is proof against the gen'ral curse  
 Of vanity that seizes all below.  
 The only amaranthine flow'r on earth  
 Is virtue ; th' only lasting treasure, truth.  
 But what is truth ? 'Twas Pilate's question put 270  
 To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.  
 And wherefore ? will not God impart his light  
 To them that ask it ?—Freely—'tis his joy,  
 His glory, and his nature, to impart.  
 But to the proud, uncandid, insincere, 275  
 Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.  
 What's that which brings contempt upon a book,



And him who writes it, though the style be neat,  
 The method clear, and argument exact :  
 That makes a minister in holy things 280  
 The joy of many, and the dread of more.  
 His name a theme for praise and for reproach?—  
 That, while it gives us worth in God's account,  
 Depreciates and undoes us in our own ?  
 What pearl is it, that rich men cannot buy, 285  
 That learning is too proud to gather up ;  
 But which the poor, and the despis'd of all,  
 Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ;  
 Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.  
 O friendly to the best pursuits of man, 290  
 Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace !  
 Domestick life in rural leisure pass'd !  
 Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets ;  
 Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
 To understand and choose thee for their own. 295  
 But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,  
 E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,  
 Though plac'd in Paradise, (for earth has still,  
 Some traces of her youthful beauty left)  
 Substantial happiness for transient joy : 300  
 Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse  
 The growing seeds of wisdom ; that suggest  
 By ev'ry pleasing image they present,  
 Reflections such as meliorate the heart,  
 Compose the passions, and exalt the mind ; 305  
 Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight  
 To fill with riot, and defile with blood.  
 Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes  
 We persecute, annihilate the tribes  
 That draw the sportsman over hill and dale, 310  
 Fearless and wrapt away from all his cares ;  
 Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,  
 Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye ;  
 Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,  
 Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats ; 315



How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,  
 Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,  
 Would find them hideous nurs'ries of the spleen,  
 And crowd the roads, impatient for the town !  
 They love the country, and none else, who seek, 320  
 For their own sake, its silence and its shade.  
 Delights which who would leave that has a heart  
 Susceptible of pity, or a mind  
 Cultur'd and capable of sober thought  
 For all the savage din of the swift pack 325  
 And clamours of the field ?—Detested sport,  
 That owes its pleasures to another's pain ;  
 That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks  
 Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued  
 With eloquence, that agonies inspire, 330  
 Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs ?  
 Vain tears, alas, and sighs that never find  
 A corresponding tone in jovial souls !  
 Well—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare  
 Has never heard the sanguinary yell 335  
 Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.  
 Innocent partner of my peaceful home,  
 Whom ten long years' experience of my care  
 Has made at last familiar : she has lost  
 Much of her vigilant instinctive dread, 340  
 Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
 Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
 That feeds thee ; thou mayst frolick on the floor  
 At ev'ning, and at night retire secure  
 To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd ; 345  
 For I have gained thy confidence, have pledg'd  
 All that is human in me, to protect  
 Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.  
 If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave ;  
 And, when I place thee in it, sighing say, 350  
 I knew at least one hare that had a friend.\*

\* See the note at the end.

How various his employments, whom the world  
 Calls idle ; and who justly in return  
 Esteems that busy world an idler too !  
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen, 355  
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,  
 And nature in her cultivated trim  
 Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—  
 Can he want occupation who has these ?  
 Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy ? 360  
 Me therefore studious of laborious ease,  
 Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,  
 Not waste it, and aware that human life  
 Is but a loan to be repaid with use,  
 When He shall call his debtors to account, 365  
 From whom are all our blessings, business finds  
 E'en here : while sedulous I seek t' improve,  
 At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd,  
 The mind he gave me ; driving it, though slack  
 Too oft, and much impeded in its work 370  
 By causes not to be divulg'd in vain,  
 To its just point—the service of mankind.  
 He that attends to his interiour self,  
 That has a heart, and keeps it ; has a mind  
 That hungers and supplies it ; and who seeks 375  
 A social, not a dissipated life,  
 Has business ; feels himself engag'd t' achieve  
 No unimportant, though a silent task.  
 A life all turbulence and noise may seem  
 To him that leads it wise, and to be prais'd ; 380  
 But wisdom is a pearl with most success  
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.  
 He that is ever occupied in storms,  
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,  
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize. 385

The morning finds the self-sequester'd man  
 Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.  
 Whether inclement seasons recommend  
 His warm but simple home, where he enjoys

With her who shares his pleasures and his heart, 390  
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,  
Which neatly she prepares : then to his book  
Well chosen, and not sullenly perus'd  
In selfish silence, but imparted, oft  
As aught occurs that she may smile to hear, 395  
Or turn to nourishment, digested well.  
Or if the garden with its many cares,  
All well repaid, demand him, he attends  
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand  
Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye, 400  
Oft loit'ring lazily, if not o'erseen,  
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.  
Nor does he govern only, or direct,  
But much performs himself. No works indeed,  
That ask robust, tough sinews bred to toil, 405  
Servile employ ; but such as may amuse,  
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.  
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,  
That meet, no barren interval between,  
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford ; 410  
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.  
These therefore are his own peculiar charge ;  
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,  
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,  
Distemper'd, or has lost prolifick pow'rs, 415  
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand  
Dooms to the knife : nor does he spare the soft  
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,  
But barren, at th' expense of neighb'ring twigs  
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick 420  
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left  
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint  
Large expectation, he disposes neat  
At measur'd distances, that air and sun,  
Admitted freely may afford their aid, 425  
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.  
Hence summer has her riche : Autumn hence,

And hence e'en Winter fills his wither'd hand  
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.\*  
 Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd, 430  
 And wise precaution ; which a clime so rude  
 Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child  
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods  
 Discov'ring much the temper of her sire.  
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild 435  
 Maternal nature had revers'd its course,  
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles ;  
 But once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.  
 He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies  
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm 440  
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep  
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft  
 As the sun peeps, and vernal airs breathe mild,  
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them ev'ry beam,  
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day. 445  
 To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,  
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare  
 So coveted, else base and disesteem'd—  
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art  
 That toiling ages have but just matur'd, 450  
 And at this moment unessay'd in song.  
 Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,  
 Their eulogy ; those sang the Mantuan bard,  
 And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains ;  
 And in thy numbers, Philips. shines for aye 455  
 The solitary shilling. Pardon, then,  
 Ye sage dispensers of poetick fame,  
 Th' ambition of one meaner far, whose pow'rs,  
 Presuming an attempt not less sublime,  
 Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste 460  
 Of critick appetite, no sordid fare,  
 A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.  
 The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,

\* *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma. Virg.*

Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,  
 And potent to resist the freezing blast : 465  
 For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf  
 Deciduous, when now November dark  
 Checks vegetation in the torpid plant  
 Expos'd to his cold breath, the task begins.  
 Warily, therefore, and with prudent heed, 470  
 He seeks a favour'd spot ; that where he builds  
 Th' agglomerated pile his frame may front  
 The sun's meridian disk, and at the back  
 Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge  
 Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread 475  
 Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe  
 Th' ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,  
 And lightly shaking it with agile hand  
 From the full fork, the saturated straw.  
 What longest binds the closest forms secure 480  
 The shapely side, that as it rises takes,  
 By just degrees, an overhanging breath,  
 Shelt'ring the base with its projected eaves ;  
 Th' uplifted frame, compact at ev'ry joint,  
 And overlaid with clear translucent glass, 485  
 He settles next upon the sloping mount,  
 Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure  
 From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls.  
 He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.  
 Thrice must the voluble and restless Earth 490  
 Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,  
 Slow gath'ring in the midst, through the square mass  
 Diffus'd, attain the surface ; when, behold !  
 A pestilent and most corrosive stream,  
 Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast, 495  
 And fast condens'd upon the dewy sash,  
 Asks egress ? which obtain'd, the overcharg'd  
 And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,  
 In volumes wheeling slow the vapour dank ;  
 And, purified, rejoices to have lost 500  
 Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage

Th' impatient fervour, which it first conceives  
 Within its reeking bosom, threat'ning death  
 To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.  
 Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft 505  
 The way to glory by miscarriage foul,  
 Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch  
 Th' auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,  
 Friendly to vital motion, may afford  
 Soft fomentation, and invite the seed. 510  
 The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,  
 And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
 Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepar'd  
 And fruitful soil, that has been treasur'd long,  
 And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds. 515  
 These on the warm and genial earth that hides  
 The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,  
 He places lightly, and, as time subdues  
 The rage of fermentation, plunges deep  
 In the soft medium, till they stand immers'd. 520  
 Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick  
 And spreading wide their spongy lobes ; at first  
 Pale, wan, and livid ; but assuming soon,  
 If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,  
 Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green. 525  
 Two leaves produc'd, two rough indented loaves,  
 Cautious he pinches from the second stalk  
 A pimple that portends a future sprout,  
 And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed  
 The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish ; 530  
 Prolifick all, and harbingers of more.  
 The crowded roots demand enlargement now,  
 And transplantation in an ampler space.  
 Indulg'd in what they wish, they soon supply  
 Large foliage, overshadowing golden flow'rs, 535  
 Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.  
 These have their sexes ; and when summer shines,  
 The bee transports the fertilizing meal  
 From flow'r to flow'r, and e'en the breathing air

Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use. 540  
 Not so when winter scowls. Assistant Art  
 Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass  
 The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich, (since Luxury must have  
 His dainties, and the World's more num'rous half 545  
 Lives by contriving delicates for you,)  
 Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares  
 The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,  
 That day and night are exercis'd, and hang  
 Upon the ticklish balance of suspense, 550  
 That ye may garnish your profuse regales  
 With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.  
 Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart  
 The process. Heat, and cold, and wind, and steam,  
 Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming  
 flies, 555

Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work  
 Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,  
 And which no care can obviate. It were long,  
 Too long, to tell th' expedients and the shifts,  
 Which he that fights a season so severe 560  
 Devises while he guards his tender trust;  
 And oft at last in vain. The learn'd and wise  
 Sarcastick would exclaim, and judge the song  
 Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit  
 Of too much labour, worthless when produc'd. 565

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too  
 Unconscious of a less propitious clime,  
 There blooms exotick beauty, warm and snug,  
 While the winds whistle and the snows descend,  
 The spiry myrtle with unwith'ring leaf 570  
 Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast  
 Of Portugal and western India there,  
 The ruddier orange, and the paler lime  
 Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,  
 And seem to smile at what they need not fear. 575  
 The ananass there with intermingling flow'rs



And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts  
 Her crimson honours ; and the spangled beau,  
 Ficoides glitters bright the winter long.  
 All plants of ev'ry leaf, that can endure 580  
 The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,  
 Live there, and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,  
 Levantine regions these ; th' Azores send  
 Their jessamine, her jessamine remote  
 Caffraria : foreigners from many lands, 585  
 They form one social shade, as if conven'd  
 By magick summons of th' Orphean lyre.  
 Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass  
 But by a master's hand, disposing well  
 The gay diversities of leaf and flow'r, 590  
 Must lend its aid t' illustrate all their charms,  
 And dress the regular yet various scene.  
 Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van  
 The dwarfish, in the rear retir'd, but still  
 Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand. 595  
 So once were rang'd the sons of ancient Rome,  
 A noble show ! while Roscius trod the stage ;  
 And so, while Garrick, as renown'd as he,  
 The sons of Albion ; fearing each to lose  
 Some note of Nature's musick from his lips. 600  
 And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty, seen  
 In ev'ry flash of his far-beaming eye,  
 Nor taste alone and well-contriv'd display  
 Suffice to give the marshall'd ranks the grace  
 Of their complete effect. Much yet remains 605  
 Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,  
 And more laborious ; cares on which depend  
 Their vigour, injur'd soon, not soon restor'd.  
 The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd  
 Loses its treasure of salubrious salts, 610  
 And disappoints the roots ; the slender roots  
 Close interwoven, where they meet the vase,  
 Must smooth be shorn away ; the sapless branch,  
 Must fly before the knife ; the wither'd leaf



Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor 615  
 Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else  
 Contagion and disseminating death.

Discharge but these kind offices, (and who  
 Would spare, that loves them, offices like these ?)  
 Well they repay the toil. The sight is pleased, 620  
 The scent regal'd, each odorif'rous leaf,  
 Each op'ning blossom, freely breathes abroad  
 Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,  
 All healthful, are th' employs of rural life. 625  
 Reiterated as the wheel of time

Runs round ; still ending, and beginning still.  
 Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll  
 That softly swell'd and gayly dress'd appears  
 A flow'ry island, from the dark green lawn 630  
 Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due  
 To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.

Here also grateful mixture of well-match'd  
 And sorted hues, (each giving each relief,  
 And by contrasted beauty shining more,) 635

Is needful. Strength may wield the pond'rous spade,  
 May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home ;  
 But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,  
 And most attractive, is the fair result  
 Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind. 640

Without it all is Gothick as the scene  
 To which th' insipid citizen resorts  
 Near yonder heath ; where industry mispent,  
 But proud of his uncouth, ill-chosen task,  
 Has made a Heav'n on Earth ; with suns and moons  
 Of close-ramm'd stones has charg'd th' encumber'd  
 soil, 646

And fairly laid the zodiack in the dust.  
 He, therefore, who would see his flow'rs dispos'd  
 Sightly and in just order, ere he gives  
 The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds, 650  
 Forecasts the future whole ; that, when the scene

Shall break into its preconceiv'd display,  
 Each for itself, and all as with one voice  
 Conspiring, may attest his bright design,  
 Nor even then dismissing as perform'd, 655  
 His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.  
 Few self-supported flow'rs endure the wind  
 Uninjur'd, but expect the upholding aid  
 Of the smooth shaven prop, and, neatly tied,  
 Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age, 660  
 For int'rest sake, the living to the dead.  
 Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffus'd  
 And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,  
 Like virtue, thriving most where little seen :  
 Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub 665  
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,  
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon  
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well  
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.  
 All hate the rank society of weeds, 670  
 Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust  
 Th' improv'rish'd earth ; an overbearing race,  
 That, like the multitude made faction mad,  
 Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.  
 O blest seclusion from a jarring world, 675  
 Which he, thus occupied, enjoys ! Retreat  
 Cannot indeed to guilty man restore  
 Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;  
 But it has peace, and much secures the mind  
 From all assaults of evil ; proving still 680  
 A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease  
 By vicious Custom, raging uncontroll'd  
 Abroad, and desolating publick life,  
 When fierce Temptation, seconded within  
 By traitor Appetite, and arm'd with darts 685  
 Temper'd in Hell, invades the throbbing breast,  
 To combat may be glorious, and success  
 Perhaps may crown us ; but to fly is safe.  
 Had I the choice of sublunary good,

What could I wish, that I possess not here ? 690  
Health, leisure, means t' improve it, friendship, peace,  
No loose or wanton, though a wand'ring muse,  
And constant occupation without care.  
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;  
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds, 695  
And profligate abusers of a world  
Created fair so much in vain for them,  
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,  
Allur'd by my report : but sure no less  
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize, 700  
And what they will not taste must yet approve.  
What we admire we praise ; and when we praise  
Advance it into notice, that, its worth  
Acknowledg'd, others may admire it too.  
I therefore recommend, though at the risk 705  
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,  
The cause of piety and sacred truth,  
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd.  
Should best secure them, and promote them most ;  
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive 710  
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.  
Pure is the nymph, though lib'ral of her smiles,  
And chaste, though unconfin'd, whom I extol.  
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,  
Vain-glorious of her charms, his Vashti forth, 715  
To grace the full pavilion. His design  
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,  
Which all might view with envy, none partake.  
My charmer is not mine alone ; my sweets,  
And she that sweetens all my bitters too, 720  
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form  
And lineaments divine I trace a hand  
That errs not, and find raptures still reaw'd,  
Is free to all men—universal prize.  
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want 725  
Admirers, and be destin'd to divide  
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds !

Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flow'rs,  
She loses all her influence. Cities then  
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines 730  
Abandon'd as unworthy of our love.  
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfum'd  
By roses ; and clear suns, though scarcely felt ;  
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure  
From clamour, and whose very silence charms ; 735  
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse,  
That metropolitan volcanoes make,  
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long ;  
And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,  
And thund'ring loud, with his ten thousand wheels ?  
They would be, were not madness in the head, 741  
And folly in the heart ; were England now,  
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell  
To all the virtues of those better days, 745  
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once  
Knew their own masters ; and laborious hinds,  
Who had surviv'd the father, serv'd the son.  
Now, the legitimate and rightful lord  
Is but a transient guest, newly arriv'd, 750  
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw  
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,  
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price  
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.  
Estates are landscapes, gaz'd upon a while, 755  
Then advertis'd, and auctioneer'd away.  
The country starves, and they that feed th' o'ercharg'd  
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,  
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.  
The wings that waft our riches out of sight, 760  
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert  
And nimble motion of those restless joints,  
That never tire, soon fans them all away.  
Improvement, too, the idol of the age,  
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes ! 765

Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!  
 Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode  
 Of our forefathers—a grave whisker'd race,  
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,  
 But in a distant spot; where more expos'd 770  
 It may enjoy th' advantage of the north,  
 And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd  
 Those naked acres to a shelt'ring grove.  
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;  
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise: 775  
 And streams, as if created for his use,  
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,  
 Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,  
 Now murm'ring soft, now roaring in cascades—  
 E'en as he bids! Th' enraptur'd owner smiles. 780  
 'Tis finish'd, and yet, finish'd as it seems,  
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,  
 A mine to satisfy th' enormous cost.  
 Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,  
 He sighs, departs, and leaves th' accomplish'd plan 785  
 That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day  
 Labour'd, and many a night pursu'd in dreams,  
 Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the Heav'n  
 He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy!  
 And now perhaps the glorious hour is come, 790  
 When, having no stake left, no pledge t' endear,  
 Her int'rests, or that gives her sacred cause  
 A moment's operation on his love,  
 He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal  
 To serve his country. Ministerial grace 795  
 Deals him out money from the publick chest;  
 Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse  
 Supplies his need with a usurious loan,  
 To be refunded duly, when his vote  
 Well-manag'd shall have earn'd its worthy price. 800  
 O innocent, compar'd with arts like these,  
 Crape, and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball  
 Sent through the trav'ller's temples! He that finds

One drop of Heav'n's sweet mercy in his cup,  
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content, 805  
So he may wrap himself in honest rags  
At his last gasp ; but could not for a world  
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread  
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,  
Sordid and sick'ning at his own success. 810

Ambition, avarice, penury, incurr'd  
By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
Of pleasure and variety, despatch  
As duly as the swallows disappear,  
The world of wand'ring knights and squires to town.  
London ingulfs them all ! The shark is there, 816  
And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech  
That sucks him · there the sycophant, and he  
Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,  
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail 820  
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.  
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp  
Were character'd on ev'ry statesman's door,  
“ *Batter'd and bankrupt fortunes mended here.*”  
These are the charms that sully and eclipse 825  
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe,  
That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,  
The hope of better things, the chance to win,  
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amus'd,  
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing 830  
Unpeople all our countries of such herds  
Of flutt'ring, loit'ring, cringing, begging, loose,  
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

O thou resort and mart of all the earth, 835  
Checker'd with all complexions of mankind,  
And spotted with all crimes ; in whom I see  
Much that I love, and more that I admire,  
And all that I abhor ; thou freckled fair,  
That pleasest and yet shock'st me ! I can laugh, 840  
And I can weep, can hope and can despond

Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee !  
Ten righteous would have sav'd a city once,  
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—  
That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else, 845  
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,  
Than Sodom in her day had pow'r to be,  
For whom God heard his Abr'ham plead in vain. .



# THE TASK.

## BOOK IV.

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### THE WINTER EVENING

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#### ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The World contemplated at a distance—Address to Winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The wagoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Publick houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter: what she was,—what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of the magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

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HARK ! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,  
That with its wearisome but needful length  
Bestrides the wintry flood ; in which the moon  
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright :—  
He comes, the herald of a noisy world, 5  
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,  
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.  
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,  
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn ; 10  
And having dropp'd th' expected bag, pass on.  
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch.



Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief  
 Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;  
 To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy. 15  
 Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
 Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
 With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks  
 Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
 Or charg'd with am'rous sighs of absent swains, 20  
 Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
 His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
 But O, th' important budget! usher'd in  
 With such heart-shaking musick, who can say  
 What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd? 25  
 Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,  
 Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantick wave  
 Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd  
 And jewel'd turban with a smile of peace,  
 Or do we grind her still? The grand debate, 30  
 The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
 The logick, and the wisdom, and the wit,  
 And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;  
 I burn to set th' imprison'd wranglers free,  
 And give them voice and utt'rance once again. 35  
 Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,  
 That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each, 40  
 So let us welcome peaceful ev'ning in.  
 Not such his ev'ning, who with shining face  
 Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeez'd  
 And bor'd with elbow points through both his sides,  
 Outcolds the ranting actor on the stage: 45  
 Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,  
 And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath  
 Of patriots, bursting with heroick rage,  
 Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
 This folio of four pages happy work! 50

Which not e'en criticks criticise ; that holds  
 Inquisitive attention, while I read,  
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;  
 What is it, but a map of busy life, 5  
 Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?  
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,  
 That tempts Ambition. On the summit see  
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;  
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them ! At his heels 60  
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
 And with a dext'rous jerk soon twists him down,  
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.  
 Here rills of oily eloquence, in soft  
 Meanders lubricate the course they take ; 65  
 The modest speaker is asham'd and griev'd,  
 T' engross a moment's notice ; and yet begs,  
 Begg a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
 However trivial, all that he conceives.  
 Sweet bashfulness ; it claims at least this praise : 70  
 The dearth of information and good sense  
 That it foretells us always comes to pass.  
 Cataracts of declamation thunder here ;  
 There forests of no meaning spread the page,  
 In which all comprehension wanders, lost ; 75  
 While fields of pleasantry amuse us there  
 With merry descants on a nation's woes.  
 The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
 But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,  
 And lilies for the brows of faded age, 80  
 Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,  
 Heav'n, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,  
 Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,  
 Sermons, and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,  
 Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits, 85  
 And Katterfelto, with his hair on end  
 At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.  
 'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,

To peep at such a world ; to see the stir  
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd ; 90  
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates  
At a safe distance, where the dying sound  
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.  
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease  
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanc'd 95  
To some secure and more than mortal height,  
That liberates and exempts me from them all.  
It turns submitted to my view, turns round  
With all its generations ; I behold  
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war 100  
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me ;  
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride  
And avarice that make man a wolf to man ;  
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,  
By which he speaks the language of his heart, 105  
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.  
He travels and expatiates, as the bee  
From flow'r to flow'r, so he from land to land ;  
The manners, customs, policy, of all  
Pay contribution to the store he gleans ; 110  
He sucks intelligence in ev'ry clime,  
And spreads the honey of his deep research  
At his return—a rich repast for me.  
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,  
Ascend his topmast through his peering eyes 115  
Discover countries, with a kindred heart  
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;  
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.  
O Winter, ruler of th' inverted year, 120  
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,  
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
Fring'd with a beard made white with other snows  
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,  
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne 125  
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,

But urg'd by storms along its slipp'ry way,  
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,  
And dreaded as thou art ! Thou hold'st the sun  
A pris'n'er in the yet undawning east, 130  
Short'ning his journey between morn and noon,  
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,  
Down to the rosy west : but kindly still  
Compensating his loss with added hours  
Of social converse and instructive ease, 135  
And gath'ring, at short notice, in one group  
The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,  
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.  
I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness, 140  
And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours  
Of long, uninterrupted ev'ning know.  
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates ;  
No powder'd pert proficient in the art 145  
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors  
Till the street rings ; no stationary steeds  
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake ;  
But here the needle plies its busy task, 150  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom ; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,  
Follow the nimble finger of the fair ; 155  
A wreath, that cannot fade, or flow'rs that blow  
With most success when all besides decay.  
The poet's or historian's page by one  
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest : 159  
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;  
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
And in the charming strife triumphant still,  
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge

On female industry : the threaded steel 165  
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.  
 The volume clos'd, the customary rites  
 Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal:  
 Such as the mistress of the world once found  
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note, 170  
 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
 And under an old oak's domestick shade,  
 Enjoy'd, spare feast ! a radish and an egg.  
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,  
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play 175  
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth :  
 Nor do we madly, like an impious World,  
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
 That made them an intruder on their joys,  
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise 180  
 A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone  
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
 While we retrace with Mem'ry's pointing wand,  
 That calls the past to our exact review,  
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare, 185  
 The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found  
 Unlook'd for, life preserv'd, and peace restor'd—  
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.  
 O ev'nings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd  
 The Sabine bard. O ev'nings, I reply, 190  
 More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,  
 As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,  
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.  
 Is Winter hideous in a garb like this ?  
 Needs he the tragick fur, the smoke of lamps, 195  
 The pent-up breath of an unsav'ry throng,  
 To thaw him into feeling, or the smart  
 And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits  
 Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile ?  
 The self-complacent actor, when he views 200  
 (Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)  
 The slope of faces, from the floor to th' roof

(As if one master spring controll'd them all,) Relax'd into a universal grin,  
Sees not a count'nance there, that speaks of joy 205  
Half so refin'd or so sincere as ours.  
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks  
That idleness has ever yet contriv'd  
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,  
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove. 210  
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,  
Unsoil'd, and swift, and of a silken sound ;  
But the world's Time is Time in masquerade !  
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledg'd,  
With motley plumes ; and where the peacock shows  
His azure eyes, is tinctur'd black and red 216  
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,  
Ensanguin'd hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
What should be, and what was an hourglass once, 220  
Becomes a dicebox, and a billiard mace  
Well does the work of his destructive sithe.  
Thus deck'd, he charms a World whom Fashion blinds  
To his true worth, most pleas'd when idle most :  
Whose only happy, are their idle hours. 225  
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress  
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school  
Of card devoted Time, and, night by night,  
Plac'd at some vacant corner of the board, 230  
Learn ev'ry trick, and soon play all the game.  
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,  
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed ?  
As he that travels far oft turns aside,  
To view some rugged rock or mould'ring tow'r, 235  
Which seen, delights him not ; then coming home,  
Describes and prints it, that the world may know  
How far he went for what was nothing worth :  
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread,  
With colours mix'd for a far diff'rent use, 240

Paint cards, and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing,  
That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.

Come, Ev'ning, once again, season of peace,  
Return, sweet Ev'ning, and continue long !  
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west, 245  
With matron step slow-moving, while the Night  
Treads on thy sweeping train ; one hand employ'd  
In letting fall the curtain of repose  
On bird and beast, the other charg'd for man  
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day : 250  
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,  
Like homely-featur'd Night, of clust'ring gems ;  
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,  
Suffices thee ; save that the moon is thine  
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high 255  
With ostentatious pageantry, but set  
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.  
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,  
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift ; 260  
And, whether I devote thy gentle hours  
To books, to musick, or the poet's toil ;  
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;  
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,  
When they command whom man was born to please ;  
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still. 266

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,  
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk 270  
Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,  
My pleasures, too, begin. But me perhaps  
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile  
With faint illumination, that uplifts  
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits 275  
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame,  
Not undelightful is an hour to me  
So spent in parlour twilight : such a gloom



Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,  
The mind contemplative, with some new theme 280  
Pregnant, or indispos'd alike to all.  
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs,  
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,  
Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess  
Fearless, a soul that does not always think. 285  
Me oft has Fancy, ludicrous and wild,  
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,  
Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd  
In the red cinders, while with poring eye  
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw. 290  
Nor less amus'd have I quiescent watch'd  
The sooty films that play upon the bars  
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view  
Of superstition, prophesying still,  
Though still deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.  
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose 296  
In indolent vacuity of thought,  
And sleeps, and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face  
Conceals the mood lethargick with a mask  
Of deep deliberation, as the man 300  
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.  
Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour  
At ev'ning, till at length the freezing blast  
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home  
The recollected pow'rs ; and snapping short 305  
The glassy threads, with which the Fancy weaves  
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.  
How calm is my recess ; and how the frost,  
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within ! 310  
I saw the woods and fields at close of day,  
A variegated show ; the meadows green,  
Though faded ; and the lands, where lately wav'd  
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,  
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share. 315  
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile



With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd  
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each  
His fav'rite herb : while all the leafless groves  
That skirt th' horizon wore a sable hue, 320  
Scarce notic'd in the kindred dusk of eve.

To-morrow brings a change, a total change !  
Which even now, though silently perform'd,  
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face  
Of universal nature undergoes. 325

Fast falls a fleecy show'r : the downy flakes  
Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives  
Gladly the thick'ning mantle ; and the green 330  
And tender blade, that fear'd the chilling blast,  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,  
Without some thistly sorrow at its side ; 335  
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
Against the law of love, to measure lots  
With less distinguish'd than ourselves ; that thus  
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,  
And sympathize with others suff'ring more. 340  
Ill fares the trav'ller now, and he that stalks  
In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team  
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore  
By congregated loads adhering close  
To the clogg'd wheels ; and in its sluggish pace 345  
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.

The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,  
While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong  
Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon  
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear 350  
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
With half shut eyes, and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth  
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.  
One hand secures his hat, save when with both

He brandishes his pliant length of whip, 355  
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
O happy ; and in my account denied  
That sensibility of pain with which  
Refinement is endu'd, thrice happy thou !  
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed 360  
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.  
The learn'd finger never need explore  
Thy vig'rous pulse ; and the unheathful east,  
That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone  
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee. 365  
Thy days roll on exempt from household care ;  
Thy wagon is thy wife ; and the poor beasts,  
That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.  
Ah, treat them kindly ; rude as thou appear'st, 370  
Yet show that thou hast mercy ! which the great,  
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,  
Humane as they would seem, not always show.  
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,  
Such claim compassion in a night like this, 375  
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.  
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long  
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad, and fed but sparsely, time to cool.  
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights 380  
Her scanty stock of brushwood blazing clear,  
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.  
The few small embers left she nurses well ;  
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands  
And crowded knees, sit cower'd o'er the sparks, 385  
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.  
The man feels least, as more inur'd than she  
To winter, and the current in his veins  
More briskly mov'd by his severer toil ;  
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs. 390  
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw  
Dangled along at the cold finger's end

Just when the day declin'd : and the brown loaf  
Lodg'd on the shelf half eaten without sauce  
Of sav'ry cheese, or butter, costlier still ; 395  
Sleep seems their only refuge : for, alas !  
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,  
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few !  
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care,  
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just 400  
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,  
Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from publick sale.  
They live, and live without extorted alms  
From grudging hands : but other boast have none,  
To sooth their honest pride, that scorns to beg, 405  
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.  
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,  
For ye are worthy ; choosing rather far  
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,  
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure 410  
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs  
Of knaves in office, partial in the work  
Of distribution ; lib'ral of their aid  
To clam'rous Importunity in rags,  
But ofttimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush 415  
To wear a tatter'd garb, however coarse,  
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth :  
These ask with painful shyness, and, refus'd  
Because deserving, silently retire !  
But be ye of good courage ! Time itself 420  
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase ;  
And all your numerous progeny, well train'd,  
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,  
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want  
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare, 425  
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.  
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor  
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.  
But poverty with most, who whimper forth  
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted wo ; 430

The effect of laziness or sottish waste.  
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad  
For plunder ; much solicitous how best  
He may compensate for a day of sloth  
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong. 435  
Wo to the gard'ner's pale, the farmer's hedge,  
Plash'd neatly, and secur'd with driven stakes  
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,  
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame  
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil, 440  
An ass's burden, and, when laden most  
And heaviest, light of foot, steals fast away  
Nor does the bordered hovel better guard  
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots  
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave 445  
Unwrench'd the door, however well secur'd,  
Where Chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps  
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,  
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,  
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain, 450  
And loudly wond'ring at the sudden change.  
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse  
Did pity of their suff'rings warp aside  
His principle, and tempt him into sin  
For their support, so destitute. But they 455  
Neglected, pine at home ; themselves, as more  
Expos'd than others, with less scruple made  
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.  
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst  
Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts 460  
His ev'ry action, and imbrates the man.  
O for a law to noose the villain's neck  
Who starves his own ; who persecutes the blood  
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates  
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love ! 465  
Pass where we may, through city or through town,  
Village or hamlet, of this merry land,  
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace

Conducts th' unguarded nose to such a whiff  
Of stale debauch, forth-issuing from the sties 470  
That law has licens'd, as makes Temp'rance reel.  
There sit, involv'd and lost in curling clouds  
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,  
The lackey, and the groom ; the craftsman there  
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil , 475  
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,  
And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,  
All learned and all drunk ! the fiddle screams  
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd  
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard, 480  
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme ; while she,  
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,  
Perch'd on the signpost, holds with even hand  
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays  
A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ; 485  
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.  
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,  
The cheek distending oath, not to be prais'd  
As ornamental, musical, polite,  
Like those which modern senators employ, 490  
Whose oath is rhet'rick, and who swear for fame !  
Behold the schools, in which plebeian minds,  
Once simple, are initiated in arts  
Which some may practise with politer grace,  
But none with readier skill !—'Tis here they learn  
The road that leads from competence and peace 496  
To indigence and rapine ; till at last  
Society, grown weary of the load,  
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.  
But censure profits little ; vain th' attempt 500  
To advertise in verse a publick pest,  
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds  
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.  
Th' excise is fatten'd with the rich result  
Of all this riot ; and ten thousand casks, 505  
For ever dribbling out their base contents,

Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,  
 Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.  
 Drink, and be mad then ; 'tis your country bids !  
 Gloriously drunk, obey th' important call ! 510  
 Her cause demands th' assistance of your throats ;  
 Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fall'n upon those happier days  
 That poets celebrate : those golden times,  
 And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings, 515  
 And Sidney, warbler of poetick prose.  
 Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts  
 That felt their virtues : Innocence, it seems,  
 From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves ;  
 The footsteps of simplicity, impress'd 520  
 Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing.)  
 Then were not all effac'd ; then speech profane,  
 And manners profligate, were rarely found,  
 Observ'd as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.  
 Vain wish ! those days were never ; airy dreams 525  
 Sat for the picture : and the poet's hand,  
 Imparting substance to an empty shade,  
 Impos'd a gay delirium for a truth.  
 Grant it : I still must envy them an age  
 That favour'd such a dream : in days like these 530  
 Impossible when Virtue is so scarce,  
 That to suppose a scene where she presides  
 Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.  
 No : we are polish'd now. The rural lass,  
 Whom once her virgin modesty and grace, 535  
 Her artless manners, and her neat attire,  
 So dignified, that she was hardly less  
 Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,  
 Is seen no more. The character is lost !  
 Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft, 540  
 And ribands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,  
 And magnified beyond all human size,  
 Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand  
 For more than half the tresses it sustains :

Her elbows ruffled, and her tott'ring form 545  
Ill propp'd upon French heels ; she might be deem'd  
(But that the basket dangling on her arm  
Interprets her more truly) of a rank  
Too proud for dairy work, or sale of eggs—  
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels, 550  
No longer blushing for her awkward load,  
Her train and her umbrella all her care !

The town has ting'd the country ; and the stain  
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,  
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs 555  
Down into scenes still rural ; but, alas,  
Scenes rarely grac'd with rural manners now !  
Time was when in the pastoral retreat  
Th' unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch  
T' invade another's right, or guard their own. 560  
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscar'd  
By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale  
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard  
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.  
But farewell now to unsuspecting nights, 565  
And slumbers unalarm'd ! Now, ere you sleep,  
See that your polish'd arms be prim'd with care,  
And drop the night-bolt ;—ruffians are abroad ;  
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat  
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear 570  
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.  
E'en daylight has its dangers ; and the walk  
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once  
Of other tenants than melodious birds,  
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold. 575  
Lamented change ! to which full many a cause  
Invet'rate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.  
The course of human things from good to ill,  
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.  
Increase of pow'r begets increase of wealth ; 580  
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess ;  
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague,



That seizes first the opulent, descends  
 To the next rank contagious, and in time  
 Taints downward all the graduated scale 585  
 Of order, from the chariot to the plough.  
 The rich, and they that have an arm to check  
 The license of the lowest in degree,  
 Desert their office ; and themselves, intent  
 On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus 590  
 To all the violence of lawless hands  
 Resign the scenes their presence might protect.  
 Authority herself not seldom sleeps,  
 Though resident, and witness of the wrong.  
 The plump convivial parson often bears 595  
 The magisterial sword in vain, and lays  
 His rev'rence and his worship both to rest  
 On the same cushion of habitual sloth.  
 Perhaps timidity restrains his arm ;  
 When he should strike he trembles, and sets free, 600  
 Himself enslav'd by terrour of the band—  
 Th' audacious convict whom he dares not bind.  
 Perhaps though by profession ghostly pure,  
 He, too, may have his vice, and sometimes prove  
 Less dainty than becomes his grave outside 605  
 In lucrative concerns. Examine well  
 His milk-white hand ; the palm is hardly clean—  
 But here and there an ugly smutch appears.  
 Foh ! 'twas a bribe that left it : he has touch'd  
 Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here 610  
 Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
 Wild fowl or venison : and his errand speeds.  
 But faster far, and more than all the rest,  
 A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark  
 Of publick virtue, ever wish'd remov'd, 615  
 Works the deplor'd and mischievous effect.  
 'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd  
 The heart of merit in the meaner class.  
 Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage  
 Of those that bear them, in whatever cause, 620



Seem most at variance with all moral good,  
And incompatible with serious thought.  
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,  
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all  
But his own simple pleasures ; now and then 625  
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair ;  
Is balloted, and trembles at the news :  
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears  
A bible oath to be whate'er they please,  
To do he knows not what. The task perform'd, 630  
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,  
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.  
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,  
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,  
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees, 635  
Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,  
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,  
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well:  
He stands erect : his slouch becomes a walk ;  
He steps right onward, martial in his air, 640  
His form and movement ; is as smart above  
As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears  
His hat, or his plum'd helmet, with a grace ;  
And, his three years of herdship expir'd,  
Returns indignant to the slighted plough. 645  
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum  
Attends him ; drives his cattle to a march ;  
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.  
'Twere well if his exteriour change were all—  
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost 650  
His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
To swear, to game, to drink ; to show at home  
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath breach,  
The great proficiency he made abroad ;  
T' astonish, and to grieve his gazing friends ; 655  
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart :  
To be a pest where he was useful once ;  
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.

Man in society is like a flow'r  
Blown in its native bed ; 'tis there alone 660  
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
Shine out ; there only reach their proper use.  
But man, associated and leagued with man  
By regal warrant or self-join'd by bond  
For int'rest sake, or swarming into clans 665  
Beneath one head for purposes of war,  
Like flow'rs selected from the rest, and bound  
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,  
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,  
Contracts defilement not to be endur'd. 670  
Hence charter'd boroughs are such publick plagues  
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps  
In all their private functions, once combin'd,  
Become a loathsome body, only fit  
For dissolution, hurtful to the main. 675  
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin  
Against the charities of domestick life,  
Incorporated, seem at once to lose  
Their nature ; and, disclaiming all regard  
For mercy and the common rights of man, 680  
Build factories with blood, conducting trade  
At the sword's point, and dying the white robe  
Of innocent commercial Justice red.  
Hence, too, the field of glory, as the world  
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array, 685  
With all its majesty of thund'ring pomp,  
Enchanting musick, and immortal wreaths,  
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught  
On principle, where foppery atones  
For folly, gallantry for ev'ry vice. 690  
But slighted as it is, and by the great  
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,  
Infected with the manners and the modes  
It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan, 695  
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,

But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd  
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice  
Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
My very dreams were rural; rural too 700  
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,  
Sportive and jingling her poetick bells,  
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their pow'rs.  
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tun'd  
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats 705  
Fatigu'd me, never weary of the pipe  
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,  
The rustick throng beneath his fav'rite beech.  
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms :  
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd 710  
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue  
To speak its excellence. I danc'd for joy.  
I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age  
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
Engag'd my wonder; and admiring still, 715  
And still admiring, with regret suppos'd  
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.  
There, too, enamour'd of the life I lov'd,  
Pathetick in its praise, in its pursuit  
Determin'd and possessing it at last, 720  
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,  
I studied, priz'd, and wish'd that I had known,  
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaim'd  
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,  
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit 725  
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.  
I still revere thee, courtly though retir'd;  
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bow'rs,  
Not unemploy'd; and finding rich amends  
For a lost world in solitude and verse. 730  
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works  
Is an ingredient in the compound man,  
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.  
And, though th' Almighty Maker has throughout

Discriminated each from each, by strokes 735  
 And touches of his hand, with so much art  
 Diversified, that two were never found  
 Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all  
 That all discern a beauty in his works,  
 And all can taste them : minds that have been form'd  
 And tutor'd with a relish more exact, 741  
 But none without some relish, none unmov'd.  
 It is a flame that dies not even there,  
 Where nothing feeds it : neither business, crowds,  
 Nor habits of luxurious city life, 745  
 Whatever else they smother of true worth  
 In human bosoms, quench it or abate.  
 The villas, with which London stands begirt,  
 Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads  
 Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air 750  
 The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer  
 The citizen, and brace his languid frame !  
 E'en in the stifling bosom of the town  
 A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms  
 That sooth the rich possessor ; much consol'd, 755  
 That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint  
 Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
 He cultivates. These serve him with a hint  
 That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green  
 Is still the liv'ry she delights to wear, 760  
 Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.  
 What are the casements lin'd with creeping herbs,  
 The prouder sashes fronted with a range  
 Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,  
 The Frenchman's darling ?\* are they not all proofs,  
 That man, immur'd in cites, still retains 766  
 His inborn inextinguishable thirst  
 Of rural scenes, compensating his loss  
 By supplemental shifts, the best he may ?  
 The most unfurnish'd with the means of life, 770  
 And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds,

\* Mignonette.

To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,  
Yet feel the burning instinct ; over head  
Suspend their crazy boxes planted thick,  
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands 775  
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there ;  
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets  
The country, with what ardour he contrives  
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease, 780  
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,  
And harmless pleasures in the throng'd abode  
Of multitudes unknown ! hail, rural life !  
Address himself who will to the pursuit  
Of honours, or emolument, or fame ; 785  
I shall not add myself to such a chase,  
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.  
Some must be great. Great offices will have  
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste, 790  
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall  
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.  
To the deliv'rer of an injur'd land  
He gives a tongue t' enlarge upon, a heart  
To feel, and courage to redress, her wrongs ; 795  
To monarchs dignity ; to judges sense ;  
To artists ingenuity and skill ;  
To me, an unambitious mind, content  
In the low vale of life, that early felt  
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long 800  
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK V.

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### THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

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#### ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of a frost at a waterfall—The empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastile, and a prisoner there—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country—Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

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'TIS morning ; and the sun, with ruddy orb  
Ascending, fires th' horizon ; while the clouds  
That crowd away before the driving wind,  
More ardent as the disk emerges more,  
Resemble most some city in a blaze, 5  
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray  
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,  
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,  
From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade  
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field. 10  
Mine spindling into longitude immense,  
In spite of gravity, and sage remark

That I myself am but a fleeting shade,  
 Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance,  
 I view the muscular proportion'd limb 15  
 Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,  
 As they design'd to mock me, at my side,  
 Take step for step ; and, as I near approach  
 The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,  
 Prepost'rous sight ! the legs without the man. 20  
 The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
 Beneath the dazzling deluge ; and the bents,  
 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,  
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine  
 Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad, 25  
 And, fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.  
 The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence  
 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep  
 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
 Their wonted fodder ; not like hung'ring man, 30  
 Fretful if unsupplied ; but silent, meek,  
 And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.  
 He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,  
 Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,  
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass ; 35  
 Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,  
 With such undeviating and even force  
 He severs it away ; no needless care,  
 Lest storm should overset the leaning pile  
 Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight. 40  
 Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd  
 The cheerful haunts of man ; to wield the axe,  
 And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,  
 From morn to eve his solitary task.  
 Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears 45  
 And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur—  
 His dog attends him. Close behind his heel  
 Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk  
 Wide-scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow  
 With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ; 50





As instinct prompts ; self-buried ere they die.  
 The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,  
 Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth nut, now 90  
 Repays their labour more ; and perch'd aloft  
 By the way-side, or stalking in the path,  
 Lean pensioners upon the trav'ller's track,  
 Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,  
 Of voided pulse or half-digested grain. 95  
 The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,  
 O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,  
 Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight  
 Lies undissolv'd ; while silently beneath,  
 And unperceiv'd, the current steals away. 100  
 Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps  
 The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,  
 And wantons in the pebbly gulf below :  
 No frost can bind it there : its utmost force  
 Can but arrest the light and smoky mist, 105  
 That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.  
 And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks  
 With forms so various, that no pow'rs of art,  
 The pencil, or the pen, may trace the scene !  
 Here glitt'ring turrets rise, upbearing high, 110  
 (Fantastick misarrangement !) on the roof  
 Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees  
 And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops  
 That trickled down the branches, fast congeal'd,  
 Shoot into pillars of pellucid length, 115  
 And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.  
 Here grotto within grotto safe defies  
 The sunbeam ; there, emboss'd and fretted wild,  
 The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes  
 Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain 120  
 The likeness of some object seen before.  
 Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,  
 And in defiance of her rival pow'rs ;  
 By these fortuitous and random strokes  
 Performing such inimitable feats, 125

As she with all her rules can never reach.  
 Less worthy of applause, though more admir'd,  
 Because a novelty, the work of man,  
 Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,  
 Thy most magnificent and mighty freak, 130  
 The wonder of the North. No forest fell  
 When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores,  
 T' enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods,  
 And make thy marble of the glassy wave.  
 In such a palace Aristæus found 135  
 Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale  
 Of his lost bees to her maternal ear :  
 In such a palace poetry might place  
 The armoury of Winter ; where his troops,  
 The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet 140  
 Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,  
 And snow, that often blinds the trav'ler's course,  
 And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.  
 Silently as a dream the fabrick rose ;  
 No sound of hammer or of saw was there : 145  
 Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts  
 Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd  
 Than water interfus'd, to make them one.  
 Lamps gracefully dispos'd, and of all hues,  
 Illumin'd ev'ry side : a wat'ry light 150  
 Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd  
 Another moon new ris'n, or meteor fall'n  
 From Heav'n to Earth, of lambent flame serene  
 So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth  
 And slipp'ry the materials, yet frost-bound 155  
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within  
 That royal residence might well befit,  
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths  
 Of flow'rs that fear'd no enemy but warmth,  
 Blush'd on the pannels. Mirror needed none 160  
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due  
 Convivial table and commodious seat  
 (What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there ;

# THE WINTER MORNING WALK. 103

Sofa, and couch, and high-built throne august.  
 The same lubricity was found in all, 165  
 And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene  
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,  
 And soon to slide into a stream again.  
 Alas ! 'twas but a mortifying stroke  
 Of undesign'd severity, that glanc'd, 170  
 (Made by a monarch,) on her own estate,  
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.  
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show  
 'Twas durable ; as worthless, as it seem'd  
 Intrinsically precious ; to the foot 175  
 Treach'rous and false ; it smil'd, and it was cold.  
 Great princes have great play-things. Some have  
 play'd  
 At hewing mountains into men, and some  
 At building human wonders mountain-high.  
 Some have amus'd the dull, sad years of life, 180  
 (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,)  
 With schemes of monumental fame ; and sought  
 By pyramids and mausolean pomp,  
 Short liv'd themselves, t' immortalize their bones.  
 Some seek diversion in the tented field, 185  
 And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.  
 But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,  
 Kings would not play at. Nations would do well,  
 T' extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
 Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds 190  
 Are gratified with mischief ; and who spoil,  
 Because men suffer it, their toy, the world.  
 When Babel was confounded, and the great  
 Confed'racy of projectors wild and vain  
 Was split into diversity of tongues, 195  
 Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,  
 These to the upland, to the valley those,  
 God drove asunder, and assign'd their lot  
 To all the nations. Ample was the boon  
 He gave them, in its distribution fair 200

And equal ; and he bade them dwell in peace.  
Peace was awhile their care ; they plough'd, and sow'd,  
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.  
But violence can never longer sleep  
Than human passions please. In every heart 205  
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war ;  
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.  
Cain had already shed a brother's blood :  
The deluge wash'd it out ; but left unquench'd  
The seeds of murder in the breast of man. 210  
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line  
Of his descending progeny was found  
The first artificer of death ; the shrewd  
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,  
And forc'd the blunt and yet unbloodied steel 215  
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.  
Him, Tubal nam'd, the Vulcan of old times,  
The sword and falchion their inventor claim ;  
And the first smith was the first murd'rer's son.  
His art surviv'd the waters ; and ere long, 220  
When man was multiplied and spread abroad  
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call  
'These meadows and that range of hills his own,  
'The tasted sweets of property begat  
Desire of more ; and industry in some, 225  
'T' improve and cultivate their just demesne,  
Made others covet what they saw so fair.  
Thus war began on Earth : these fought for spoil,  
And those in self-defence. Savage at first  
The onset, and irregular. At length 230  
One eminent above the rest for strength,  
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,  
Was chosen leader ; him they serv'd in war,  
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds,  
Rev'renc'd no less. Who could with him compare ?  
Or who so worthy to control themselves, 236  
As he, whose prowess had subdu'd their foes ?  
Thus war, affording field for the display

Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,  
 Which have their exigencies too, and call 240  
 For skill in government, at length made king.  
 King was a name too proud for man to wear  
 With modesty and meekness ; and the crown  
 So dazzling in their eyes, who set it on,  
 Was sure t' intoxicate the brows it bound 245  
 It is the abject property of most,  
 That, being parcel of the common mass,  
 And destitute of means to raise themselves,  
 They sink, and settle lower than they need.  
 They know not what it is to feel within 250  
 A comprehensive faculty, that grasps  
 Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,  
 Almost without an effort, plans too vast  
 For their conception, which they cannot move.  
 Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk 255  
 With gazing, when they see an able man  
 Step forth to notice ; and, besotted thus,  
 Build him a pedestal, and say, " Stand there,  
 " And be our admiration and our praise."  
 They roll themselves before him in the dust, 260  
 Then most deserving in their own account  
 When most extravagant in his applause,  
 As if, exalting him, they rais'd themselves.  
 Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound  
 And sober judgment, that he is but man, 265  
 They demi-deify and fume him so,  
 That in due season he forgets it too.  
 Inflated and astrut with self conceit,  
 He gulps the windy diet ; and ere long,  
 Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks 270  
 The world was made in vain, if not for him.  
 Thenceforth they are his cattle ; drudges, born  
 To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,  
 And sweating in his service, his caprice  
 Becomes the soul that animates them all. 275  
 He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,

Spent in the purchase of renown for him,  
An easy reck'ning : and they think the same.  
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings  
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became 280  
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp ;  
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.  
Strange, that such folly, as lifts bloated man  
To eminence, fit only for a god,  
Should ever drivel out of human lips, 285  
E'en in the cradled weakness of the world !  
Still stranger much, that, when at length mankind  
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,  
And could discriminate and argue well  
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet 290  
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear  
And quake before the gods themselves had made :  
But above measure strange, that neither proof  
Of sad experience, nor examples set  
By some whose patriot virtue has prevail'd, 295  
Can even now, when they are grown mature  
In wisdom, and with philosophick deeds  
Familiar, serve t' emancipate the rest !  
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone  
To rev'rence what is ancient, and can plead 300  
A course of long observance for its use,  
That even servitude, the worst of ills,  
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,  
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.  
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock 305  
Of rational discussion, that a man.  
Compounded and made up like other men  
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust  
And folly in as ample measure meet  
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules, 310  
Should be a despot absolute, and boast  
Himself the only freeman of his land ?  
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,  
Wage war, with any or with no pretence



Of provocation giv'n, or wrong sustain'd, 315  
 And force the beggarly last doit by means  
 That his own humour dictates, from the clutch  
 Of Poverty, that thus he may procure  
 His thousands, weary of penurious life,  
 A splendid opportunity to die ? 320  
 Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
 Jotham ascrib'd to his assembled trees  
 In politick convention) put your trust  
 I' th' shadow of a bramble, and, reclin'd  
 In fancied peace beneath his dang'rous branch, 325  
 Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,  
 Where find ye passive fortitude ? Whence springs  
 Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good  
 To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang  
 His thorns with streamers of continual praise ? 330  
 We too are friends to loyalty. We love  
 The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,  
 And reigns content within them : him we serve  
 Freely and with delight, who leaves us free :  
 But recollecting still that he is man, 335  
 We trust him not too far. King though he be,  
 And king in England too, he may be weak  
 And vain enough to be ambitious still ;  
 May exercise amiss his proper pow'rs,  
 Or covet more than freemen choose to grant ! 340  
 Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,  
 T' administer, to guard, t' adorn the state,  
 But not to warp or change it. We are his,  
 To serve him nobly in the common cause,  
 True to the death ; but not to be his slaves. 345  
 Mark now the diff'rence, ye that boast your love  
 Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.  
 We love the man ; the paltry pageant, you :  
 We the chief patron of the commonwealth ;  
 You, the regardless author of its woes : 350  
 We, for the sake of liberty, a king ;  
 You, chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake :

Our love is principle, and has its root  
 In reason ; is judicious, manly, free ;  
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod, 355  
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.  
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,  
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,  
 I would not be a king to be belov'd  
 Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise, 360  
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,  
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought.

Whose freedom is by suffrance, and at will  
 Of a superiour, he is never free.  
 Who lives, and is not weary of a life 365  
 Expos'd to manacles, deserves them well.  
 The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,  
 And forc'd to abandon what she bravely sought,  
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,  
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause 370  
 Not often unsuccessful : pow'r usurp'd  
 Is weakness when oppos'd ; conscious of wrong,  
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.  
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought  
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess 375  
 All that the contest calls for ; spirit, strength,  
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts ;  
 The surest presage of the good they seek.\*

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
 To France than all her losses and defeats, 380  
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,  
 Her house of bondage, worse than that of old  
 Which God aveng'd on Pharaoh—the Bastile  
 Ye horrid tow'rs, th' abode of broken hearts :  
 Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair, 385  
 That monarchs have supplied from age to age

\* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware, that it is become almost fashionable, to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation ; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

With musick, such as suits their sov'reign ears—  
 The sighs and groans of miserable men !  
 There's not an English heart that would not leap  
 To hear that ye were fall'n at last ; to know 390  
 That e'en our enemies, so oft employ'd  
 In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
 For he who values Liberty, confines  
 His zeal for her predominance within  
 No narrow bounds ; her cause engages him 395  
 Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.  
 There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,  
 Immur'd though unaccus'd, condemn'd untried,  
 Cruelly spar'd, and hopeless of escape.  
 There, like the visionary emblem seen 400  
 By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,  
 And, filleted about with hoops of brass,  
 Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.  
 To count the hour-bell and expect no change ;  
 And ever as the sullen sound is heard, 405  
 Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note  
 To him whose moments all have one dull pace,  
 Ten thousand rovers in the world at large  
 Account it musick ; that it summons some  
 To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball ; 410  
 The wearied hireling finds it a release  
 From labour ; and the lover, who has chid  
 Its long delay, feels ev'ry welcome stroke  
 Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—  
 To fly for refuge from distracting thought 415  
 To such amusements as ingenious wo  
 Contrives, hard shifting, and without her tools—  
 To read engraven on the mouldy walls,  
 In stagg'ring types, his predecessor's tale,  
 A sad memorial, and subjoin his own— 420  
 To turn purveyor to an overgorg'd  
 And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest  
 Is made familiar, watches his approach,  
 Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—

To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro 425  
The studs that thick emboss his iron door ;  
Then downward and then upward, then aslant,  
And then alternate ; with a sickly hope  
By dint of change to give his tasteless task  
Some relish ; till the sum, exactly found 430  
In all directions, he begins again—  
O comfortless existence ! hemm'd around  
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel  
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death ?  
That man should thus encroach on fellow man, 435  
Abridge him of his just and native rights,  
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold  
Upon th' endearments of domestick life  
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,  
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word 440  
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,  
Moves indignation, makes the name of king,  
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)  
As dreadful as the Manichean god,  
Ador'd through fear, strong only to destroy. 445  
'Tis liberty alone, that gives the flow'r  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume ;  
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,  
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,  
Is evil : hurts the faculties, impedes 450  
Their progress in the road of science ; blinds  
The eyesight of Discovery ; and begets,  
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind,  
Bestial, a meager intellect, unfit  
To be the tenant of man's noble form. 455  
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,  
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeez'd  
By publick exigence, till annual food  
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,  
Thee I account still happy, and the chief 460  
Among the nations, seeing thou art free ;  
My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,

Replete with vapours, and disposes much  
 All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine :  
 Thine unadulterate manners are less soft 465  
 And plausible than social life requires,  
 And thou hast need of discipline and art,  
 To give thee what politer France receives  
 From Nature's bounty—that humane address  
 And sweetness, without which no pleasure is 470  
 In converse, either starv'd by cold reserve,  
 Or flush'd by fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.  
 Yet, being free, I love thee : for the sake  
 Of that one feature can be well content,  
 Disgrac'd as thou hast been, poor as thou art, 475  
 To seek no sublunary rest beside.  
 But once enslav'd, farewell ! I could endure  
 Chains no where patiently ; and chains at home,  
 Where I am free by birthright, not at all.  
 Then what were left of roughness in the grain 480  
 Of British natures, wanting its excuse  
 That it belongs to freemen, would disgust  
 And shock me. I should then with double pain  
 Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;  
 And, if I must bewail the blessing lost, 485  
 For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,  
 I would at least bewail it under skies  
 Milder, among a people less austere ;  
 In scenes, which having never known me free,  
 Would not reproach me with the loss I felt. 490  
 Do I forebode impossible events,  
 And tremble at vain dreams ? Heav'n grant I may !  
 But th' age of virtuous politicks is past,  
 And we are deep in that of cold pretence.  
 Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere, 495  
 And we too wise to trust them. He that takes  
 Deep in his soft credulity the stamp  
 Design'd by loud declaimers on the part  
 Of liberty, (themselves the slaves of lust,)  
 Incurs derision for his easy faith 500

And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :  
 For when was publick virtue to be found,  
 Where private was not ? Can he love the whole,  
 Who loves no part ? He be a nation's friend,  
 Who is in truth the friend of no man there ? 505  
 Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,  
 Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake  
 That country, if at all, must be belov'd ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad  
 For England's glory, seeing it wax pale 510  
 And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts  
 So loose to private duty, that no brain  
 Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,  
 Can dream them trusty to the gen'ral weal.  
 Such were they not of old, whose temper'd blades 515  
 Dispers'd the shackles of usurp'd control,  
 And hew'd them link from link ; then Albion's sons  
 Were sons indeed ; they felt a filial heart  
 Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs ;  
 And, shining each in his domestick sphere, 520  
 Shone brighter still, once call'd to publick view.  
 'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot  
 Forbids their interference, looking on  
 Anticipate perforce some dire event ;  
 And seeing the old castle of the state, 525  
 That promis'd once more firmness, so assail'd,  
 That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,  
 Stand motionless expectants of its fall.  
 All has its date below ; the fatal hour  
 Was register'd in Heav'n ere time began. 530  
 We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
 Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,  
 Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.  
 We build with what we deem eternal rock ;  
 A distant age asks where the fabrick stood ; 535  
 And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,  
 The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unsung

By poets, and by senators unprais'd,  
 Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs 540  
 Of Earth and Hell confed'rate take away :  
 A liberty, which persecution, fraud,  
 Oppression, prisons, have no pow'r to bind  
 Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.  
 'Tis liberty of heart deriv'd from Heav'n, 545  
 Bought with *his* blood, who gave it to mankind,  
 And seal'd with the same token. It is held  
 By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure  
 By th' unimpeachable and awful oath  
 And promise of a God. His other gifts 550  
 All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,  
 And are august ! but this transcends them all.  
 His other works, the visible display  
 Of all-creating energy and might,  
 Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word 555  
 That, finding an interminable space  
 Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,  
 And made so sparkling what was dark before.  
 But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,  
 Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene, 560  
 Might well suppose th' artificer divine  
 Meant it eternal, had he not himself  
 Pronounc'd it transient, glorious as it is,  
 And, still designing a more glorious far,  
 Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise. 565  
 These therefore are occasional, and pass ;  
 Form'd for the confutation of the fool,  
 Whose lying heart disputes against a God ;  
 That office serv'd, they must be swept away.  
 Not so the labours of his love : they shine 570  
 In other heav'ns than these that we behold,  
 And fade not. There is Paradise that fears  
 No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends  
 Large prelibation oft to saints below.  
 Of these the first in order, and the pledge, 575  
 And confident assurance of the rest,



Is liberty ; a flight into his arms,  
 Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,  
 A clear escape from tyrannising lust,  
 And full immunity from penal wo. 580

Chains are the portion of revolted man,  
 Stripes, and a dungeon ; and his body serves  
 The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,  
 Opprobrious residence, he finds them all.  
 Propense his heart to idols, he is held 585

In silly dotage on created things,  
 Careless of their Creator. And that low  
 And sordid gravitation of his pow'rs  
 To a vile clod, so draws him, with such force  
 Resistless from the centre he should seek, 590

That he at last forgets it. All his hopes  
 Tend downward ; his ambition is to sink,  
 To reach a depth profounder still, and still  
 Profounder, in the fathomless abyss  
 Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death. 595

But ere he gain the comfortless repose  
 He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul  
 In Heav'n-renouncing exile, he endures—  
 What does he not, from lusts oppos'd in vain,  
 And self-reproaching conscience ? He foresees 600

The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,  
 Fortune, and dignity ; the loss of all  
 That can ennoble man and make frail life,  
 Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,  
 Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins  
 Infect his happiest moments, he forbodes 606

Ages of hopeless mis'ry. Future death,  
 And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,  
 Like that which sends him to the dusty grave :  
 But unrepealable, enduring, death. 610

Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears :  
 What none can prove a forgery, may be true ;  
 What none but bad men wish exploded, must.  
 That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud

Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst 615  
 Of laughter his compunctions are sincere ;  
 And he abhors the jest by which he shines.  
 Remorse begets reform. His master-lust  
 Falls first before his resolute rebuke,  
 And seems dethron'd and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,  
 But spurious and short liv'd : the puny child 621  
 Of self-congratulating Pride begot  
 On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,  
 And fights again ; but finds, his best essay  
 A presage ominous, portending still 625  
 Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.  
 Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foil'd  
 So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,  
 Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now  
 Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause 630  
 Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd ;  
 With shallow shifts and old devices, worn  
 And tatter'd in the service of debauch,  
 Cov'ring his shame from his offended sight.  
 " Hath God indeed giv'n appetites to man, 635  
 And stor'd the earth so plenteously with means  
 To gratify the hunger of his wish ;  
 And doth he reprobate, and will he damn  
 The use of his own bounty ? making first  
 So frail a kind, and then enacting laws 640  
 So strict, that less than perfect must despair ?  
 Falsehood ! which whoso but suspects of truth,  
 Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.  
 Do they themselves, who undertake for hire  
 The teacher's office, and dispense at large 645  
 Their weekly dole of edifying strains,  
 Attend to their own musick ? have they faith  
 In what, with such solemnity of tone  
 And gesture, they propound to our belief ?  
 Nay—Conduct hath the loudest tongue The voice  
 Is but an instrument, on which the priest 651  
 May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,

The unequivocal, authentick deed,  
We find sound argument, we read the heart."

Such reas'nings (if that name must needs belong  
T' excuses in which reason has no part) 656

Serve to compose a spirit well inclin'd  
To live on terms of amity with vice,  
And sin without disturbance. Often urg'd,  
(As often as, libidinous discourse 660

Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes  
Of theological and grave import,)  
They gain at last his unreserv'd assent ;  
Till, harden'd his heart's temper in the forge  
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair, 665

He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,  
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill ;  
Vain tamp'ring has but foster'd his disease ;  
'Tis desp'rate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.  
Haste, now, philosopher, and set him free. 670

Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear  
Of rectitude and fitness, moral truth  
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,  
Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps  
Directly to the *first and only fair*. 675

Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the pow'rs  
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise ;  
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,  
And with poetick trappings grace thy prose,  
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.— 680

Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high sounding brass,  
Smitten in vain ! such musick cannot charm  
The eclipse, that intercepts truth's heav'nly beam  
And chills and darkens a wide wand'ring soul.  
The *still small voice* is wanted He must speak, 685  
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect ;  
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change  
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech  
And stately tone of moralists, who boast 690

As if, like him of fabulous renown,  
 They had indeed ability to smooth  
 The shag of savage nature, and were each  
 An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song ;  
 But transformation of apostate man 695  
 From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,  
 Is work for Him that made him. He alone,  
 And he by means in philosophick eyes  
 Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves  
 The wonder ; humanizing what is brute 700  
 In the lost kind, extracting from the lips  
 Of asps their venom, overpow'ring strength  
 By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toil'd, and, in their country's cause  
 Bled nobly ; and their deeds, as they deserve, 705  
 Receive proud recompense. We give in charge  
 Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historick muse,  
 Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
 To latest times ; and Sculpture, in her turn,  
 Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass 710  
 To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust :  
 But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
 To those who, posted at the shrine of Truth,  
 Have fall'n in her defence. A patriot's blood,  
 Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed, 715  
 And, for a time, ensure to his lov'd land  
 The sweets of liberty and equal laws ;  
 But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
 And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed  
 In confirmation of the noblest claim— 720  
 Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
 To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
 To soar, and to anticipate the skies.  
 Yet few remember them. They liv'd unknown,  
 Till persecution dragg'd them into fame, 725  
 And chas'd them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew  
 —No marble tells us whither. With their names  
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song :

And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed 730  
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,  
But gives the glorious suff'ers little praise.\*

He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain  
That hellish foes. confed'rate for his harm, 735  
Can wind around him, but he casts it off  
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.  
He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and though poor, perhaps, compar'd  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight, 740  
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers. His t' enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel,  
But who, with filial confidence inspir'd, 745  
Can lift to heav'n an unpresumptuous eye,  
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"  
Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,  
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy, 750  
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind  
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,  
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world  
So cloth'd with beauty for rebellious man?  
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap 755  
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good  
In senseless riot; but ye will not find  
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,  
A liberty like his, who, unimpeach'd  
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong, 760  
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,  
And has a richer use of yours than you.  
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth  
Of no mean city; plann'd or ere the hills

\* See Hume.

Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea, 765  
 With all his roaring multitude of waves.

His freedom is the same in ev'ry state ;  
 And no condition of this changeful life,  
 So manifold in cares, whose ev'ry day  
 Brings its own evil with it, makes it less : 770  
 For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,  
 Nor penury, can cripple or confine.

No nook so narrow, but he spreads them there  
 With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds  
 His body bound ; but knows not what a range 775  
 His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain ;  
 And that to bind him is a vain attempt,  
 Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste  
 His works. Admitted once to his embrace, 780  
 Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before :  
 Thine eye shall be instructed ; and thine heart,  
 Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,  
 Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.  
 Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone, 785  
 And eyes intent upon the scanty herb  
 It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,  
 Ruminates heedless of the scene outspread  
 Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
 From inland regions to the distant main. 790

Man views it, and admires ; but rests content  
 With what he views. The landscape has his praise,  
 But not its author. Unconcern'd who form'd  
 The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,  
 And such well pleas'd to find it, asks no more. 795  
 Not so the mind that has been touch'd from Heav'n,  
 And in the school of sacred wisdom taught  
 To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,  
 Fair as it is, existed ere it was.

Nor for its own sake merely, but for his 800  
 Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;  
 Praise that from earth resulting, as it ought,

To earth's acknowledg'd sov'reign, finds at once  
Its only just proprietor in Him.

The soul that sees him, or receives sublim'd 805

New faculties, or learns at least t' employ  
More worthily the powers she own'd before,  
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,

A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms 810

Terrestrial in the vast and the minute ;  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,  
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.

Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds 815

With those fair ministers of light to man,  
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they  
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste  
To gratulate the new-created earth, 820

Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts,

That navigate a sea that knows no storms,

Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,

If from your elevation, whence ye view 825

Distinctly scenes invisible to man,

And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet

Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race

Favour'd as ours ; transgressors from the womb

And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise, 830

And to possess a brighter Heaven than yours ?

As one, who, long detain'd on foreign shores,

Pants to return, and when he sees afar

His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,

From the green wave emerging, darts an eye 835

Radiant with joy toward the happy land ;

So I with animated hopes behold,

And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,

That show like beacons in the blue abyss,

Ordain'd to guide th' embodied spirit home 840



From toilsome life to never-ending rest.  
 Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires  
 That give assurance of their own success,  
 And that, infus'd from Heaven, must thither tend."

So reads he Nature, whom the lamp of truth 845  
 Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!  
 Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost,  
 With intellects bemaz'd in endless doubt,  
 But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built  
 With means that were not, till by thee employ'd, 850  
 Worlds that had never been, hadst thou in strength  
 Been less, or less benevolent than strong.  
 They are thy witnesses, who speak thy pow'r  
 And goodness infinite, but speak in ears  
 That hear not, or receive not their report. 855  
 In vain thy creatures testify of thee,  
 Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed  
 A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine,  
 That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,  
 And with the boon gives talents for its use. 860  
 Till thou art heard, imaginations vain  
 Possess the heart, and fables false as hell:  
 Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death  
 The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.  
 We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,  
 The glory of thy work; which yet appears 866  
 Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,  
 Challenging human scrutiny, and prov'd  
 Then skilful most when most severely judg'd.  
 But chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st: 870  
 Thy providence forbids that fickle pow'r  
 (If pow'r she be, that works but to confound)  
 To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.  
 Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can  
 Instruction, and inventing to ourselves 875  
 Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,  
 Or disregard our follies, or that sit  
 Amus'd spectators of this bustling stage.

Thee we reject, unable to abide  
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure, 880  
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause,  
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.  
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,  
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heav'n  
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy. 885  
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not,  
Till thou hast touch'd them ; 'tis the voice of song,  
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works ;  
Which he that hears it, with a shout repeats,  
And adds his rapture to the general praise ! 890  
In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide  
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile  
The author of her beauties, who, retir'd  
Behind his own creation, works unseen  
By the impure, and hears his pow'r denied : 895  
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,  
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !  
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove  
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.  
From thee is all that soothes the life of man, 900  
His high endeavour, and his glad success,  
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ; 905  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

# THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

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## THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

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### ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK

Bells at a distance—Their effect—A fine noon in winter—A sheltered walk—Meditation better than books—Our familiarity with the course of Nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is—The transformation that Spring effects in a shrubbery, described—A mistake concerning the course of Nature corrected—God maintains it by an unremitted act—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd—Animals happy, a delightful sight—Origin of cruelty to animals—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture—That proof illustrated by a tale—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them—Their good and useful properties insisted on—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man—The groans of the creation shall have an end—A view taken of the restoration of all things—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness—Conclusion.

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THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd  
With melting airs or martial, brisk, or grave ;  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies, 5  
How soft the musick of those village bells,  
Falling at intervals upon the ear  
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,  
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,  
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on ! 10

With easy force it opens all the cells  
Where Mem'ry slept. Wherever I have heard  
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,  
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.  
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes, 15  
That in a few short moments I retrace  
(As in a map the voyager his course)  
The windings of my way through many years.  
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,  
It seem'd not always short ; the rugged path, 20  
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,  
Mov'd many a sigh at its disheart'ning length.  
Yet feeling present evils, while the past  
Faintly impress the mind or not at all,  
How readily we wish time spent revok'd, 25  
That we might try the ground again, where once  
(Through inexperience as we now perceive)  
We miss'd that happiness we might have found !  
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend !  
A father, whose authority, in show 30  
When most severe, and must'ring all its force,  
Was but the graver countenance of love ;  
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might low'r,  
And utter now and then an awful voice,  
But had a blessing in its darkest frown, 35  
Threat'ning at once and nourishing the plant.  
We lov'd, but not enough, the gentle hand  
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age, allur'd  
By ev'ry gilded folly, we renounc'd  
His shelt'ring side, and wilfully forewent 40  
That converse which we now in vain regret.  
How gladly would the man recall to life  
The boy's neglected sire ! a mother too,  
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,  
Might he demand them at the gates of death. 45  
Sorrow has, since they went, subdu'd and tam'd  
The playful humour : he could now endure,  
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears,)

And feel a parent's presence no restraint.  
 But not to understand a treasure's worth, 50  
 Till time has stol'n away the slighted good,  
 Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
 And makes the World the wilderness it is.  
 The few that pray at all, pray oft amiss,  
 And, seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold, 55  
 Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in its roughest mood ;  
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon  
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
 And where the woods fence off the northern blast, 60  
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
 The dazzling splendour of the scene below.  
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ; 65  
 And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r,  
 Whence all the musick. I again perceive  
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
 And settle in soft musings as I tread  
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms, 70  
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
 The roof, though moveable through all its length  
 As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,  
 And, intercepting in their silent fall  
 The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me. 75  
 No noise is here, or none that hinders thought  
 The red-breast warbles still, but is content  
 With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd :  
 Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light  
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes 80  
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,  
 That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.  
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
 Charms more than silence Meditation here  
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart 85  
 May give a useful lesson to the head,

And Learning wiser grow without his books.  
 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,  
 Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men ; 90  
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
 Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,  
 Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place,  
 Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich. 95  
 Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much ;  
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.  
 Books are not seldom talismans and spells,  
 By which the magick art of shrewder wits  
 Hold an unthinking multitude enthral'd. 100  
 Some to the fascination of a name,  
 Surrender judgment hood-wink'd. Some the style  
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds  
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranc'd.  
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear 105  
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,  
 And swallowing, therefore, without pause or choice  
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.  
 But tree and rivulets, whose rapid course  
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer, 110  
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,  
 And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time  
 Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn  
 root,  
 Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,  
 Not shy, as in the world, and to be won 115  
 By slow solicitation, seize at once  
 The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.  
 What prodigies can pow'r divine perform  
 More grand than it produces year by year,  
 And all in sight of inattentive man ? 120  
 Familiar with th' effect, we slight the cause,  
 And in the constancy of Nature's course,  
 The regular return of genial months,

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And renovation of a faded world,  
 See nought to wonder at. Should God again, 125  
 As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
 Of th' undeviating and punctual sun,  
 How would the world admire ! But speaks it less  
 An agency divine, to make him know  
 His moment when to sink and when to rise, 130  
 Age after age, than to arrest his course ?  
 All we behold is miracle ; but seen  
 So duly, all is miracle in vain.  
 Where now the vital energy, that mov'd  
 While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph 135  
 Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins  
 Of leaf and flow'r ? It sleeps ; and th' icy touch  
 Of unprolifick winter has impress'd  
 A cold stagnation on th' intestine tide.  
 But let the months go round, a few short months, 140  
 And all shall be restor'd. These naked shoots,  
 Barren as lances, among which the wind  
 Makes wintry musick, sighing as it goes,  
 Shall put their graceful foliage on again,  
 And, more aspiring, and with ampler spread, 145  
 Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.  
 Then each in its peculiar honours clad,  
 Shall publish even to the distant eye  
 Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich  
 In streaming gold ; syringa, iv'ry pure 150  
 The scentless and the scented rose ; this red  
 And of a humbler growth, the other\* tall,  
 And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
 Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,  
 Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf, 155  
 That the wind severs from the broken wave ;  
 The lilack, various in array, now white,  
 Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set  
 With purple spikes pyramidal, as if  
 Studious of ornament, yet unresolv'd 160

\* The Guelder Rose.



Which hue she most approv'd, she chose them all ;  
 Copious of flowers, the woodbine, pale and wan,  
 But well compensating her sickly looks  
 With never cloying odours, early and late ;  
 Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm 165  
 Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,  
 That scarce a leaf appears ; mezereon, too,  
 Though leafless, well-attir'd and thick beset  
 With blushing wreaths, investing every spray ;  
 Althæa with the purple eye ; the broom 170  
 Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,  
 Her blossoms ; and luxuriant above all  
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf  
 Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more 175  
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.—  
 These have been, and these shall be in their day ;  
 And all this uniform uncolour'd scene  
 Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,  
 And flush into variety again. 180  
 From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
 Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man  
 In heav'nly truth ; evincing, as she makes  
 The grand transition, that their lives and works  
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God. 185  
 The beauties of the wilderness are his,  
 That makes so gay the solitary place,  
 Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,  
 That cultivation glories in, are his.  
 He sets the bright procession on its way, 190  
 And marshals all the order of the year ;  
 He marks the bounds, which winter may not pass,  
 And blunts his pointed fury ; in its case,  
 Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,  
 Uninjur'd, with inimitable art ; 195  
 And, ere one flow'ry season fades and dies,  
 Designs the blooming wonders of the next.  
 Some say that in the origin of things,

When all creation started into birth,  
 The infant elements receiv'd a law 200  
 From which they swerv'd not since. That under force  
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
 And need not His immediate hand who first  
 Prescrib'd their course, to regulate it now.  
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God 205  
 Th' encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
 The great artificer of all that moves  
 The stress of a continual act, the pain  
 Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
 As too laborious and severe a task. 210  
 So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,  
 To span omnipotence, and measure might  
 That knows no measure, by the scanty rule  
 And standard of his own, that is to-day,  
 And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down. 215  
 But how should matter occupy a charge,  
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law  
 So vast in its demands, unless impell'd  
 To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,  
 And under pressure of some conscious cause? 220  
 The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,  
 Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
 Nature is but a name for an effect,  
 Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire,  
 By which the mighty process is maintain'd, 225  
 Who sleeps not, is not weary ; in whose sight  
 Slow circling ages are as transient days ;  
 Whose work is without labour ; whose designs  
 No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts ;  
 And whose beneficence no charge exhausts. 230  
 Him blind antiquity profan'd, not serv'd,  
 With self-taught rites, and under various names,  
 Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,  
 And Flora, and Vertumnus ; peopling earth  
 With tutelary goddesses and gods, 235  
 That were not ; and commending as they would

To each some province, garden, field, or grove.  
 But all are under one. One spirit—His  
 Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—  
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower 240  
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
 Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires  
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,  
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
 In grains as countless as the seaside sands, 245  
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
 Happy who walks with him ! whom what he finds  
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,  
 Of what he views of beautiful or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestick oak 250  
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God  
 His presence, who made all so fair, perceiv'd,  
 Makes all still fairer As with him no scene  
 Is dreary, so with him all seasons please. 255  
 Though winter had been none, had man been true  
 And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,  
 Yet not in vengeance ; as this smiling sky,  
 So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
 And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream 260  
 Recov'ring fast its liquid musick, prove.

Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tun'd  
 To contemplation, and within his reach  
 A scene so friendly to his fav'rite task,  
 Would waste attention at the checker'd board. 265  
 His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
 Marching and countermarching, with an eye  
 As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridg'd  
 And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand  
 Trembling, as if eternity were hung 270  
 In balance on his conduct of a pin ?  
 Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,  
 Who pant with application misapplied  
 To trivial toys, and, pushing iv'ry balls

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Across a velvet level, feel a joy 275  
 Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds  
 Its destin'd goal, of difficult access.  
 Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon  
 To miss, the mercer's plague from shop to shop  
 Wand'ring, and litt'ring with unfolded silks 280  
 The polish'd counter, and approving none,  
 Or promising with smiles to call again.  
 Nor him, who by his vanity seduc'd,  
 And sooth'd into a dream, that he discerns  
 The difference of a Guido from a daub, 285  
 Frequents the crowded auction : station'd there  
 As duly as the Langford of the show,  
 With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,  
 And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant  
 And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease : 290  
 Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,  
 He notes it in his book, then raps his box,  
 Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,  
 That he has let it pass—but never bids !  
 Here unmolested, through whatever sign 295  
 The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,  
 Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,  
 Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.  
 E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,  
 That calls the unwonted villager abroad 300  
 With all her little ones, a sportive train,  
 To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,  
 And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick  
 A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook—  
 These shades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,  
 Grown so familiar with her frequent guest, 306  
 Scarce shuns me ; and the stock-dove, unalarm'd,  
 Sits cooing in the pinetree, nor suspends  
 His long love ditty for my near approach.  
 Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm, 310  
 That age or injury has hollow'd deep,  
 Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,

He has outslept the winter, ventures forth,  
 To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,  
 The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play ; 315  
 He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,  
 Ascends the neighb'ring beech ; there whisks his brush,  
 And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,  
 With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,  
 And anger insignificantly fierce. 320

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
 For human fellowship, as being void  
 Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
 To love and friendship both, that is not pleas'd  
 With sight of animals enjoying life, 325  
 Nor feels their happiness augment his own.  
 The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade  
 When none pursues, through mere delight of heart  
 And spirits buoyant with excess of glee ;  
 The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet, 330  
 That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,  
 Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,  
 Starts to the voluntary race again ;  
 The very kine that gambol at high noon,  
 The total herd receiving first from one, 335  
 That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,  
 Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth  
 Their efforts, yet resolv'd, with one consent,  
 To give such act and utterance as they may  
 To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd— 340  
 These, and a thousand images of bliss,  
 With which kind Nature graces ev'ry scene,  
 Where cruel man defeats not her design,  
 Impart to the benevolent, who wish  
 All that are capable of pleasure pleas'd, 345  
 A far superiour happiness to theirs,  
 The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had ris'n, obedient to his call  
 Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,  
 When he was crown'd as never king was since. 350

God set the diadem upon his head,  
 And angel choirs attended. Wond'ring stood  
 The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,  
 All happy, and all perfect in their kind,  
 The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts,  
 To see their sov'reign, and confess his sway. 356  
 Vast was his empire, absolute his pow'r,  
 Or bounded only by a law, whose force  
 'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel  
 And own—the law of universal love. 360  
 He rul'd with meekness, they obey'd with joy ;  
 No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,  
 And no distrust of his intent in theirs.  
 So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,  
 Where kindness on his part who rul'd the whole, 365  
 Begat a tranquil confidence in all,  
 And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.  
 But sin marr'd all ; and the revolt of man,  
 That source of evils not exhausted yet,  
 Was punish'd with revolt of his from him. 370  
 Garden of God, how terrible the change  
 Thy groves and lawns then witness'd ! Ev'ry heart,  
 Each animal, of ev'ry name, conceiv'd  
 A jealousy and an instinctive fear,  
 And, conscious of some danger, either fled 375  
 Precipitate the loath'd abode of man,  
 Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,  
 As taught him too to tremble in his turn.  
 Thus harmony and family accord  
 Were driv'n from Paradise ; and in that hour 380  
 The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd  
 To such gigantick and enormous growth,  
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
 Hence date the persecution and the pain,  
 That man inflicts on all inferiour kinds, 385  
 Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,  
 To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,  
 Or his base gluttony, are causes good

And just in his account, why bird and beast  
Should suffer torture, and the streams be died 390  
With blood of their inhabitants impal'd.  
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war  
Wag'd with defenceless innocence, while he,  
Not satisfied to prey on all around,  
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs 395  
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.  
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes  
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,  
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,  
They fear'd, and as his perfect image, lov'd. 400  
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,  
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,  
Unvisited by man. There they are free,  
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd ;  
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play. 405  
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude  
Within the confines of their wild domain :  
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—  
And if he spare him, spares him on the terms  
Of royal mercy, and through gen'rous scorn 410  
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.  
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live  
Dependent upon man ; those in his fields,  
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof. 415  
They prove too often at how dear a rate  
He sells protection—Witness at his foot  
The spaniel dying for some venial fault  
Under dissection of the knotted scourge ;  
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells 420  
Driv'n to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,  
To madness ; while the savage at his heels  
Laughs at the frantick sufferer's fury, spent  
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.  
He too is witness, noblest of the train 425  
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse ;



With unsuspecting readiness he takes  
 His murd'rer on his back, and, push'd all day  
 With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life,  
 To the far distant goal arrives and dies. 430

So little mercy shows who needs so much !  
 Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
 Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.  
 He lives and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
 (As if barbarity were high desert,) 435

Th' inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise  
 Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
 The honours of his matchless horse his own.  
 But many a crime, deem'd innocent on earth,  
 Is register'd in Heav'n ; and these no doubt, 440  
 Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.

Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
 But God will never. When he charg'd the Jew  
 T' assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise ;  
 And when the bush-exploring boy, that seiz'd 445  
 The young, to let the parent bird go free ;  
 Prov'd he not plainly, that his meaner works  
 Are yet his care, and have an int'rest all,  
 All, in the universal Father's love ?

On Noah, and in him on all mankind, 450  
 The charter was conferr'd by which we hold  
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim  
 O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.  
 But read the instrument, and mark it well :  
 Th' oppression of a tyrannous control 455  
 Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield,  
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute ?

The Governor of all. himself to all  
 So bountiful, in whose attentive ear 460  
 The unfledg'd raven and the lion's whelp  
 Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs  
 Of hunger unassuag'd, has interpos'd,  
 Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite

Th' injurious trampler upon Nature's law, 465  
That claims forbearance even for a brute.  
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart ;  
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike  
The blameless animal, without rebuke,  
On which he rode. Her opportune offence 470  
Sav'd him, or the unrelenting seer had died.  
He sees that human equity is slack  
To interfere, though in so just a cause :  
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb  
And helpless victims with a sense so keen 475  
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength  
And such sagacity to take revenge,  
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.  
An ancient, not a legendary tale,  
By one of sound intelligence rehears'd, 480  
(If such who plead for Providence may seem  
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretch'd towards the setting sun,  
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,  
Dwelt young Misagathus ; a scorner he 485  
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,  
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.  
He journey'd : and his chance was, as he went,  
To join a trav'ller, of far different note,  
Evander, fam'd for piety, for years 490  
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.  
Fame had not left the venerable man  
A stranger to the manners of the youth,  
Whose face, too, was familiar to his view.  
Their way was on the margin of the land, 495  
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base  
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.  
The charity that warm'd his heart, was mov'd  
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile  
Gentle and affable, and full of grace, 500  
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd  
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths

Not hardly thunder'd forth, or rudely press'd,  
 But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet  
 "And dost thou dream," th' impenetrable man 505  
 Exclaim'd, "that me the lullabies of age,  
 And fantasies of dotards, such as thou,  
 Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?  
 Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave  
 Need no such aids as superstition lends 510  
 "To steel their hearts against the dread of death."  
 He spoke, and to the precipice at hand  
 Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks,  
 And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought  
 Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave. 515  
 But though the felon on his back could dare  
 The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed  
 Declin'd the death, and wheeling swiftly round,  
 Or ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,  
 Baffled his rider, sav'd against his will. 520  
 The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd  
 By medicine well applied, but without grace  
 The heart's insanity admits no cure.  
 Enrag'd the more, by what might have reform'd  
 His horrible intent, again he sought 525  
 Destruction, with a zeal to be destroy'd,  
 With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood,  
 But still in vain. The Providence that meant  
 A longer date to the far nobler beast,  
 Spar'd yet again th' ignobler for his sake. 530  
 And now, his prowess prov'd, and his sincere  
 Incurable obduracy evinc'd,  
 His rage grew cool, and, pleas'd perhaps t' have earn'd  
 So cheaply, the renown of that attempt,  
 With looks of some complacence he resum'd 535  
 His road, deriding much the blank amaze  
 Of good Evander, still where he was left  
 Fix'd motionless, and petrified with dread.  
 So on they far'd. Discourse on other themes  
 Ensuing seem'd t' obliterate the past; 540

And tamer far for so much fury shown,  
(As is the course of rash and fiery men,)  
The rude companion smil'd, as if transform'd—  
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near  
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come. 545  
The impious challenger of Pow'r divine  
Was now to learn, that Heav'n, though slow to wrath,  
Is never with impunity defied.

His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,  
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage, 550  
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,  
Rush'd to the cliff, and, having reach'd it, stood.  
At once the shock unseated him: he flew  
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier; and immers'd  
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not, 555  
The death he had deserv'd, and died alone.  
So God wrought double justice; made the fool  
The victim of his own tremendous choice,  
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends, 560  
(Though grac'd with polish'd manners and fine sense,  
Yet wanting sensibility,) the man  
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
An inadvertent step may crush the snail  
That crawls at ev'ning in the publick path; 565  
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,  
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.  
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
And charg'd perhaps with venom, that intrudes,  
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes 570  
Sacred to neatness and repose, th' alcove,  
The chamber, or refectory, may die:  
A necessary act incurs no blame.  
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,  
And guiltless of offence, they range the air, 575  
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:  
There they are privileg'd; and he that hunts  
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,

Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,  
 Who, when she form'd, design'd them an abode. 580  
 The sum is this : If man's convenience, health,  
 Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims  
 Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.  
 Else they are all—the meanest things that are—  
 As free to live, and to enjoy that life, 585  
 As God was free to form them at the first,  
 Who in his sov'reign wisdom made them all.  
 Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons  
 To love it too. The spring time of our years  
 Is soon dishonour'd and defil'd in most 590  
 By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand  
 To check them. But, alas ! none sooner shoots,  
 If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,  
 Than cruelty, most dev'lish of them all.  
 Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule 595  
 And righteous limitation of its act,  
 By which Heav'n moves in pard'ning guilty man ;  
 And he that shows none, being ripe in years,  
 And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
 Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn. 600  
 Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more  
 By our capacity of grace divine,  
 From creatures, that exist but for our sake,  
 Which having serv'd us, perish, we are held  
 Accountable ; and God some future day 605  
 Will reckon with us roundly for th' abuse  
 Of what he deems no mean nor trivial trust.  
 Superiour as we are, they yet depend  
 Not more on human help than we on theirs.  
 Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were giv'n 610  
 In aid of our defects. In some are found  
 Such teachable and apprehensive parts,  
 That man's attainments in his own concerns,  
 Match'd with th' expertness of the brutes in theirs,  
 Are oft-times vanquish'd and thrown far behind. 615  
 Some show that nice sagacity of smell,

And read with such discernment, in the port  
And figure of the man, his secret aim,  
That oft we owe our safety to a skill  
We could not teach, and must despair to learn. 620  
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop  
To quadruped instructors many a good  
And useful quality, and virtue too,  
Rarely exemplified among ourselves.  
Attachment never to be wean'd, or chang'd 625  
By any change of fortune : proof alike  
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect ;  
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat  
Can move or warp ; and gratitude for small  
And trivial favours, lasting as the life, 630  
And glist'ning even in the dying eye.  
Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms  
Wins publick honour ; and ten thousand sit  
Patiently present at a sacred song,  
Commemoration mad ; content to hear 635  
(O wonderful effect of musick's power !)  
Messiah's culyog for Handel's sake !  
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—  
(For, was it less, what heathen would have dar'd  
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath, 640  
And hang it up in honour of a man ?)  
Much less might serve, when all that we design  
Is but to gratify an itching ear,  
And give the day to a musician's praise.  
Remember Handel ? Who, that was not born 645  
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,  
Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?  
Yes—we remember him ; and while we praise  
A talent so divine, remember too  
That His most holy book from whom it came, 650  
Was never meant, was never us'd before,  
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man.  
But hush !—the Muse perhaps is too severe  
And with a gravity beyond the size

And measure of th' offence, rebukes a deed 655  
 Less impious than absurd, and owing more  
 To want of judgment than to wrong design  
 So in the chapel of old Ely House,  
 When wand'ring Charles, who meant to be the third,  
 Had fled from William, and the news was fresh, 660  
 The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,  
 And eke did roar right merrily, two staves,  
 Sung to the praise and glory of King George!  
 —Man praises man: and Garrick's mem'ry next,  
 When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made 665  
 The idol of our worship while he liv'd  
 The God of our idolatry once more,  
 Shall have its altar; and the world shall go  
 In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.  
 The theatre too small, shall suffocate 670  
 Its squeez'd contents, and more than it admits  
 Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return  
 Ungratified; for there some noble lord  
 Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,  
 Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak, 675  
 And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp, and stare,  
 To show the world how Garrick did not act.  
 For Garrick was a worshipper himself;  
 He drew the liturgy, and fram'd the rites  
 And solemn ceremonial of the day, 680  
 And call'd the world to worship on the banks  
 Of Avon, fam'd in song. Ah, pleasant proof  
 That piety has still in human hearts  
 Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.  
 The mulb'rry tree was hung with blooming wreaths;  
 The mulb'rry tree stood centre of the dance; 686  
 The mulb'rry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;  
 And from his touchwood trunk the mulb'rry tree  
 Supplied such relicks as devotion holds  
 Still sacred, and preserves with pious care. 690  
 So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,  
 And mirth without offence. No few return'd,



Doubtless, much edified, and all refresh'd.

—Man praises man. The rabble all alive

From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes, 695

Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,

A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.

Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,

To gaze in 's eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave

Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy: 700

While others, not so satisfied, unhorse

The gilded equipage, and turning loose

His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.

Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the  
state?

No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No. 705

Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,

That finds out ev'ry crevice of the head

That is not sound, and perfect, hath in theirs

Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,

And his own cattle must suffice him soon. 710

Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,

And dedicate a tribute, in its use

And just direction sacred, to a thing

Doom'd to the dust, or lodg'd already there.

Encomium in old time was poet's work; 715

But poets, having lavishly long since

Exhausted all materials of the art,

The task now falls into the publick hand;

And I contented with an humbler theme,

Have pour'd my stream of panegyrick down 720

The vale of Nature, where it creeps and winds

Among her lovely works with a secure

And unambitious course, reflecting clear,

If not the virtues, yet the worth of brutes.

And I am recompensed, and deem the toils 725

Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine

May stand between an animal and wo,

And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON. 143

Which heav'n has heard for ages, have an end. 730  
 Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
 Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp ;  
 The time of rest, the promis'd sabbath, comes  
 Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh  
 Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course 735  
 Over a sinful world ; and what remains  
 Of this tempestuous state of human things  
 Is merely as the working of a sea  
 Before a calm that rocks itself to rest ;  
 For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds 740  
 The dust that waits upon his sultry march,  
 When sin hath mov'd him, and his wrath is hot,  
 Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend  
 Propitious in his chariot pav'd with love ;  
 And what his storms have blasted and defac'd 745  
 For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet  
 Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch ;  
 Nor can the wonders it records be sung  
 To meaner musick, and not suffer loss. 750  
 But when a poet, or when one like me,  
 Happy to rove among poetick flow'rs,  
 Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last  
 On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,  
 Such is the impulse and the spur he feels, 755  
 To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,  
 That not t' attempt it, arduous as he deems  
 The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
 Scenes of accomplish'd bliss ! which who can see, 760  
 Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
 His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy ?  
 Rivers of gladness water all the earth,  
 And clothe all climes with beauty ; the reproach  
 Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field 765  
 Laughs with abundance ; and the land, once lean,

Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.  
The various seasons woven into one,  
And that one season an eternal spring, 770  
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
For there is none to covet, all are full.  
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,  
Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon  
Together, or all gambol in the shade 775  
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream ;  
Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
Lurks in the serpent now ; the mother sees,  
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm, 780  
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
One Lord, one Father. Errour has no place ;  
That creeping pestilence is driv'n away ; 785  
The breath of Heav'n has chas'd it. In the heart  
No passion touches a discordant string,  
But all is harmony and love. Disease  
Is not : the pure and uncontaminate blood  
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age. 790  
One song employs all nations ; and all cry,  
" Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !"  
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy, 795  
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.  
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd ;  
See Salem built, the labour of a God !  
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ; 800  
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands  
Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy,

And endless her increase. Thy rams are there  
 Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there ;\* 805  
 The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
 And Saba's spiey groves pay tribute there.  
 Praise is in all her gates ; upon her walls,  
 And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,  
 Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there 810  
 Kneels with the native of the farthest west ;  
 And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
 And worships. Her report has travell'd forth  
 Into all lands. From ev'ry clime they come  
 To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy, 815  
 O Sion ! an assembly such as Earth  
 Saw never, such as Heav'n stoops down to see.

Thus heav'nward all things tend. For all were once  
 Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd.  
 So God has greatly purpos'd ; who would else 820  
 In his dishonour'd works himself endure  
 Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.  
 Haste, then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,  
 Ye slow-revolving seasons ! we would see  
 (A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet) 825  
 A world, that does not dread and hate his laws,  
 And suffer for its crime ; would learn how fair  
 The creature is, that God pronounces good ;  
 How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
 Here ev'ry drop of honey hides a sting : 830  
 Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flow'rs  
 And e'en the joy, that haply some poor heart  
 Derives from Heav'n, pure as the fountain is,  
 Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint  
 From touch of human lips, at best impure. 835  
 O for a world in principle as chaste  
 As this is gross and selfish ! over which

\* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs in the prophetick Scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,  
That govern all things here, should'ring aside  
The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her 840  
To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife  
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men ;  
Where Violence shall never lift the sword,  
Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,  
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears : 845  
Where he that fills an office, shall esteem  
Th' occasion it presents of doing good  
More than the perquisite : where Law shall speak  
Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts  
And Equity ; not jealous more to guard 850  
A worthless form than to decide aright :  
Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,  
Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)  
With lean performance ape the work of Love !  
Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns, 855  
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
Thou who alone art worthy ! It was thine  
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth ;  
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since ;  
And o'erpaid its value with thy blood. 860  
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts  
Thy title is engraven with a pen  
Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.  
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay  
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see 865  
The dawn of thy last advent, long desir'd,  
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,  
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.  
The very spirit of the world is tir'd  
Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long, 870  
" Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?"  
The infidel has shot his bolts away,  
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,  
He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoil'd,  
And aims them at the shield of Truth again. 875

The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,  
 That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;  
 And all the mysteries to faith propos'd,  
 Insulted and traduc'd are cast aside,  
 As useless, to the moles and to the bats. 889  
 They now are deem'd the faithful, and are prais'd.  
 Who, constant only in rejecting Thee,  
 Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,  
 And quit their office for their errour's sake.  
 Blind and in love with darkness ! yet e'en these 885  
 Worthy, compar'd with sycophants, who knee  
 Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man ;  
 So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare  
 The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,  
 And what they will. Ail pastors are alike 890  
 To wand'ring sheep, resolv'd to follow none.  
 Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain ;  
 For these they live, they sacrifice to these,  
 And in their service wage perpetual war 894  
 With Conscience and with Thee. Lust in their hearts,  
 And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth  
 To prey upon each other ; stubborn, fierce,  
 High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.  
 Thy prophets speak of such ; and noting down  
 The features of the last degen'rate times, 900  
 Exhibit every lineament of these.  
 Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
 Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
 Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world ! 905  
 He is the happy man, whose life e'en now  
 Shows somewhat of that happier life to come ;  
 Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,  
 Is pleas'd with it, and, were he free to choose,  
 Would make his fate his choice ; whom peace, the fruit  
 Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith, 911  
 Prepare for happiness ; bespeak him one  
 Content indeed to sojourn while he must

Below the skies, but having there his home.  
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search 915  
Of objects more illustrious in her view ;  
And occupied as earnestly as she,  
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the World.  
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;  
He seeks not hers, for he has prov'd them vain. 920  
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems  
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.  
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
Whose pow'r is such, that whom she lifts from earth  
She makes familiar with a Heav'n unseen, 926  
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.  
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,  
And censur'd oft as useless. Stillest streams  
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird 930  
That flutters least is longest on the wing.  
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has rais'd,  
Or what achievements of immortal fame  
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.  
His warfare is within. There, unfatigu'd, 935  
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights  
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,  
And never-with'ring wreaths, compar'd with which,  
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.  
Perhaps the self-approving, haughty world, 940  
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks  
Searce deigns to notice him, or if she see,  
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,  
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,  
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes 945  
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring  
And plenteous harvest, to the pray'r he makes,  
When, Isaac like, the solitary saint  
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,  
And think on her who thinks not for herself. 950  
Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns



Of little worth, an idler in the best,  
 If, author of no mischief and some good,  
 He seeks his proper happiness by means  
 That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine. 955  
 Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,  
 Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,  
 Account him an encumbrance on the state,  
 Receiving benefits, and rend'ring none.  
 His sphere, though humble, if that humble sphere  
 Shine with his fair example ; and though small 961  
 His influence, if that influence all be spent  
 In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,  
 In aiding helpless indigence in works  
 From which at least a grateful few derive 965  
 Some taste of comfort in a world of wo ;  
 Then let the supercilious great confess  
 He serves his country, recompenses well  
 The state beneath the shadow of whose vine  
 He sits secure, and in the scale of life 970  
 Holds no ignoble, though a slighted, place.  
 The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,  
 Must drop indeed the hope of publick praise ;  
 But he may boast, what few that win it can,  
 That if his country stand not by his skill, 975  
 At least his follies have not wrought her fall.  
 Polite Refinement offers him in vain  
 Her golden tube, through which a sensual World  
 Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,  
 The neat conveyance hiding all the offence. 980  
 Not that he peevishly rejects a mode,  
 Because that World adopts it. If it bear  
 The stamp and clear impression of good sense,  
 And be not costly more than of true worth  
 He puts it on, and for decorum sake 985  
 Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.  
 She judges of refinement by the eye ;  
 He, by the test of conscience, and a heart  
 Not soon deceiv'd ; aware, that what is base

No polish can make sterling ; and that vice, 990  
Though well perfum'd and elegantly dress'd,  
Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flow'rs,  
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far  
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.  
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away, 995  
More golden than that age of fabled gold  
Renown'd in ancient song ; not vex'd with care  
Or stain'd with guilt, beneficent, approv'd  
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.  
So glide my life away ! and so at last, 1000  
My share of duties decently fulfill'd,  
May some disease, not tardy to perform  
Its destin'd office, yet with gentle stroke,  
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,  
Beneath the turf that I have often trod. 1005  
It shall not grieve me then, that once, when call'd  
To dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse,  
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,  
With that light Task ; but soon, to please her more,  
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please, 1010  
Let fall th' unfinish'd wreath, and rov'd for fruit ;  
Rov'd far, and gather'd much ; some harsh, 'tis true,  
Pick'd from the thorns and briars of reproof,  
But wholesome, well digested ; grateful some  
To palates that can taste immortal truth ; 1015  
Insipid else, and sure to be despis'd.  
But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.  
In vain the poet sings, and the World hears,  
If he regard not, though divine the theme.  
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime 1020  
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,  
To charm His ear whose eye is on the heart,  
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

AN

## EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

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DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—  
 Alas, how time escapes ! 'tis even so—  
 With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,  
 And always friendly, we were wont to cheat  
 A tedious hour—and now we never meet !  
 As some grave gentleman in Terence says,  
 ('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)  
 Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
 Strange fluctuation of all human things !  
 True. Changes will befall, and friends may part  
 But distance only cannot change the heart ;  
 And, where I call'd to prove th' assertion true,  
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it, then, that in the vane of life,  
 Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,  
 We find the friends we fancied we had won,  
 Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none ?  
 Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch ?  
 No ; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,  
 Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,  
 Dreading a negative, and overaw'd  
 Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.  
 Go, fellow,—whither ?—turning short about—  
 Nay—Stay at home—you're always going out.  
 'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—  
 For what ?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.—  
 A friend ! Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—  
 Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—

And fetch my cloak ; for, though the night be raw,  
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
And was his plaything often when a child ;  
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,  
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.  
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,  
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made .  
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,  
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.  
Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,  
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain,  
To prove an evil, of which all complain,  
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)  
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.  
Once on a time, an emp'ror, a wise man,  
No matter where, in China or Japan,  
Decreed, that whosoever should offend  
Against the well-known duties of a friend,  
Convicted once, should ever after wear  
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.  
The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
That all was naught within, and all found out

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear  
Such hard and arbitrary measure here ;  
Else, could a law like that which I relate.  
Once have the sanction of our triple state.  
Some few, that I have known in days of old,  
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ;  
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow  
Might traverse Engiand safely to and fro,  
An honest man, close button'd to the chin,  
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

# TIROCINIUM :

OR,

## A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.



Κεφάλαιον δη παιδείας ορθῇ τροφῇ.....PLATO.

Ἀρχὴ πολιτείας ἀπάσης νεῶν τροφά.....DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE  
REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN  
RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,  
THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

**POEM,**

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION, IN PREFERENCE  
TO AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,  
IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,  
WILLIAM COWPER.

*Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.*

## TIROCINIUM.



IT is not from his form, in which we trace  
Strength join'd with beauty, dignity with grace,  
That man, the master of this globe, derives  
His right of empire over all that lives.  
That form, indeed, th' associate of a mind 5  
Vast in its pow'rs, ethereal in its kind  
That form, the labour of almighty skill,  
Fram'd for the service of a freeborn will,  
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul. 10  
Here is the state, the splendour, and the throne,  
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.  
For her the Mem'ry fills her ample page  
With truths pour'd down from ev'ry distant age ;  
For her amasses an unbounded store, 15  
The wisdom of great nations, now no more ;  
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil ;  
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil ;  
When copiously supplied, then most enlarg'd,  
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharg'd. 20  
For her the Fancy, roving unconfin'd,  
The present muse of ev'ry pensive mind,  
Works magick wonders, adds a brighter hue  
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.  
At her command winds rise, and waters roar, 25  
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore ;



With flow'r and fruit the wilderness supplies,  
 Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.  
 For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife,  
 That Grace and Nature have to wage through life, 30  
 Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,  
 Appointed sage preceptor to the will,  
 Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice  
 Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth 35  
 To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth?  
 And when, descending, he resigns the skies,  
 Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,  
 Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,  
 And owns her pow'r on ev'ry shore he laves? 40  
 Why do the seasons still enrich the year,  
 Fruitful and young as in their first career?  
 Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,  
 Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;  
 Summer in haste the thriving charge receives 45  
 Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,  
 Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews  
 Die them at last in all their glowing hues—  
 'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,  
 Pow'r misemployed, munificence misplac'd, 50  
 Had not its author dignified the plan,  
 And crown'd it with the majesty of man.  
 Thus form'd, thus plac'd, intelligent, and taught,  
 Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,  
 The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws 55  
 Finds in a sober moment time to pause.  
 To press th' important question on his heart,  
 "Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"  
 If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,  
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave; 60  
 Endu'd with reason only to descry  
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye;  
 With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,  
 The force he spends against their fury vain;

And if, soon after having burn'd, by turns, 65  
 With ev'ry lust with which frail Nature burns,  
 His being end where death desolves the bond,  
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond ;  
 Then he of all that Nature has brought forth,  
 Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth, 70  
 And useless while he lives and when he dies,  
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,  
 Are not important always as dear bought,  
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains, 75  
 A childish waste of philosophick pains ;  
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,  
 That 'tis our shame and mis'ry not to learn,  
 Shine by the side of ev'ry path we tread  
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read. 80

'Tis true, that if to trifle life away  
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,  
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore,  
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,  
 Were all that Heav'n requir'd of human kind, 85  
 And all the plan their destiny design'd,  
 What none could rev'rence all might justly blame,  
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.  
 But reason heard, and nature well perus'd,  
 At once the dreaming mind is disabus'd. 90

If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
 Reflect his attributes who plac'd them there,  
 Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd  
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,  
 'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose t' invest 95  
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,  
 Receiv'd his nobler nature, and was Made  
 Fit for the pow'r in which he stands array'd ;  
 That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,  
 He too might make his author's wisdom clear, 100  
 Praise him on earth, or, obstinately dumb,  
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.

This once believ'd, 'twere logick misapplied,  
To prove a consequence by none denied,  
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth 105  
Betimes into the mould of heav'nly truth,  
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,  
Nor, ignorantly wand'ring, miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most  
A quickness, which in later life is lost : 110  
Preserv'd from guilt by salutary fears,  
Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.  
Too careless often, as our years proceed,  
What friends we sort with, or what books we read,  
Our parents yet exert a prudent care, 115  
To feed our infant minds with proper fare ;  
And wisely store the nurs'ry by degrees  
With wholesome learning, yet acquir'd with ease.  
Neatly secur'd from being soil'd or torn  
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn, 120  
A book, (to please us at a tender age  
'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page.)  
Presents the pray'r the Saviour deign'd to teach,  
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.  
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next 125  
Through moral narrative, or sacred text ;  
And learn with wonder how this world began,  
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man.  
Points which, unless the Scripture made them plain,  
The wisest heads might agitate in vain. 130  
O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing  
Back to the season of life's happy spring,  
I pleas'd remember, and, while mem'ry yet  
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget ;  
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale 135  
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail ;  
Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile ;  
Witty, and well employ'd, and like thy Lord,  
Speaking in parables his slighted word ; 140

I name thee not, lest so despis'd a name  
 Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;  
 Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,  
 That mingles all my brown with sober gray,  
 Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road, 145  
 And guides the *progress* of the soul to God.  
 'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage  
 Their childhood, pleas'd them at a riper age ;  
 The man approving what had charm'd the boy,  
 Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy ; 150  
 And not with curses on his heart, who stole  
 The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.  
 The stamp of artless piety impress'd  
 By kind tuition on his yielding breast,  
 The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw, 155  
 Regards with scorn, though once receiv'd with awe ;  
 And, warp'd into the labyrinth of lies,  
 That babblers, call'd philosophers, devise,  
 Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan  
 Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man 160  
 Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof  
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough ;  
 Point to the cure describe a Saviour's cross 165  
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,  
 The young apostate sickens at the view,  
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,  
 Oppos'd against the pleasures Nature loves ! 170  
 While self-betray'd and wilfully undone,  
 She longs to yield, no sooner woo'd than won.  
 Try now the merits of this bless'd exchange,  
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.  
 Time was, he clos'd as he began the day 175  
 With decent duty, not asham'd to pray :

The practice was a bond upon his heart,  
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;  
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease  
 A pow'r confess'd so lately on his knees. 180  
 But now farewell all legendary tales,  
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;  
 Pray'r to the winds, and caution to the waves ;  
 Religion makes thee free by nature slaves !  
 Priests have invented, and the world admir'd 185  
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspir'd ;  
 Till Reason, now no longer overaw'd,  
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;  
 And, common sense diffusing real day,  
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away 190  
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth  
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;  
 Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,  
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.  
 And thus, well-tutor'd only while we share 195  
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;  
 And taught at schools much mythologick stuff,\*  
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;  
 Our early notices of truth, disgrac'd,  
 Soon lose their credit, and are all effac'd. 200  
 Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;  
 That in good time the stripling's finish'd taste  
 For loose expense, and fashionable waste,  
 Should prove your ruin and his own at last ; 205  
 Train him in publick with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten  
 In infidelity and lewdness men.

\* The author begs leave to explain. Sensible that without such knowledge neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a school boy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture, which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old, 210  
 That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold ;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;  
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise ; 215  
 His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.  
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,  
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;  
 The management of tyroes of eighteen 220  
 Is difficult, their punishment obscene.  
 The stout tall captain, whose superiour size  
 The minor heroes view with envious eyes,  
 Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix  
 Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks. 225  
 His pride, that scorns t' obey or to submit,  
 With them is courage ; his effront'ry, wit.  
 His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,  
 Robb'ry of gardens, quarrels in the streets, 229  
 His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,  
 Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.  
 In little bosoms such achievements strike  
 A kindred spark : they burn to do the like :  
 Thus half' accomplish'd ere he yet begin  
 To show the peeping down upon his chin ; 235  
 And, as maturity of years comes on,  
 Made just th' adept that you design'd your son ;  
 T' ensure the perseverance of Lis course,  
 And give your monstrous project all its force,  
 Send him to college. If he there be tam'd, 240  
 Or in one article of vice reclaim'd,  
 Where no regard of ord'nances is shown  
 Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own,  
 Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,  
 Where neither strumpets' charms nor drinking bout,  
 Nor gambling practices, can find it out. 246  
 Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,

Ye nurs'ries of our boys, we owe to you :

Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,  
For publick schools 'tis publick folly feeds. 250

The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,  
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,  
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,  
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.

To follow foolish precedents, and wink 255

With both our eyes, is easier than to think ;

And such an age as ours balks no expense,

Except of caution, and of common sense ;

Else sure notorious fact and proof so plain,

Would turn our steps into a wiser train. 260

I blame not those who, with what care they can,

O'erwatch the num'rous and unruly clan ;

Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare

Promise a work, of which they must despair.

Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole, 265

A ubiquarian presence and control—

Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi stray'd,

Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd ?

Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves

Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves, 270

Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,

Boys as ye were, the gravity of men ;

Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd

To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.

But ye connive at what ye cannot cure, 275

And evils, not to be endur'd, endure,

Lest pow'r exerted, but without success,

Should make the little ye retain still less.

Ye once were justly fam'd for bringing forth

Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ; 280

And in the firmament of fame still shines

A glory, bright as that of all the signs,

Of poets rais'd by you, and statesmen, and divines.

Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,

And no such lights are kindling in their stead. 285



Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays,  
 As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;  
 And seem, if judg'd by their expressive looks,  
 Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say, Muse, (for education made the song, 290  
 No muse can hesitate, or linger long,)  
 What causes move us, knowing as we must,  
 That these *menageries* all fail their trust,  
 To send our sons to scout and scamper there,  
 While colts and puppies cost us so much care ? 295

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
 We love the play-place of our early days ;  
 The scene is touching, and the heart is stone  
 That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.  
 The wall on which we tried our graving skill, 300  
 The very name we carv'd subsisting still ;

The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,  
 Tho' mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, not yet destroy'd ;  
 The little ones, unbotton'd, glowing hot,  
 Playing our games, and on the very spot ; 305

As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
 The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw ;  
 To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
 Or drive it devious with a dext'rous pat ;  
 The pleasing spectacle at once excites 310  
 Such recollection of our own delights,  
 That, viewing it, we seem almost t' obtain  
 Our innocent sweet simple years again.

This fond attachment to the well-known place,  
 Whence first we started into life's long race, 315  
 Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,  
 We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.

Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share  
 Of classick food begins to be his care,  
 With his own likeness plac'd on either knee, 320  
 Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee ;  
 And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,  
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box ;

Then turning, he regales his list'ning wife  
 With all the adventures of his early life ; 325  
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,  
 In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;  
 What shifts he us'd, detected in a scrape,  
 How he was flogg'd or had the luck t' escape ;  
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold 330  
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.  
 Retracing thus his *frolicks*, ('tis a name  
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame,)  
 He gives the local bias all its sway ;  
 Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play, 335  
 And destines their bright genius to be shown  
 Just in the scene where he display'd his own.  
 'The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught,  
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;  
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough, 340  
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.  
 Ah happy designation, prudent choice,  
 Th' event is sure ; expect it, and rejoice !  
 Soon see your wish fulfill'd in either child—  
 The pert made porter, and the tame made wild. 345  
 The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,  
 Excus'd th' encumbrance of more solid worth,  
 Are best dispos'd of where with most success  
 They may acquire that confident address,  
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense, 350  
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,  
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,  
 With so much reason all expect from them.  
 But families of less illustrious fame,  
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name, 355  
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,  
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,  
 What dream they of, that with so little care  
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure there ?  
 They dream of little Charles or William grac'd 360  
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist :

They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw :  
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.  
The father, who designs his babe a priest,  
Dreams him episcopally such at least ; 365  
And while the playful jockey scours the room  
Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,  
In fancy sees him more superbly ride  
In coach with purple lin'd, and mitres on its side.  
Events improbable and strange as these, 370  
Which only a parental eye foresees,  
A publick school shall bring to pass with ease.  
But how ! Resides such virtue in that air,  
As must create an appetite for pray'r ?  
And will it breathe into him all the zeal, 375  
That candidates for such a prize should feel,  
To take the lead and be the foremost still  
In all true worth and literary skill ?  
“ Ah, blind to bright futurity, untaught  
The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought ?  
Church-ladders are not always mounted best 381  
By learned clerks, and Latinists profess'd.  
Th' exalted prize demands an upward look,  
Not to be found by poring on a book.  
Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek, 385  
Is more than adequate to all I seek.  
Let erudition grace him or not grace,  
I give the bauble but the second place ;  
His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,  
Subsist and centre in one point—a friend. 390  
A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.  
His intercourse with peers and sons of peers,  
There dawns the splendour of his future years :  
In that bright quarter his propitious skies 395  
Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.  
*Your Lordship and Your Grace !* what school can teach  
A rhet'rick equal to those parts of speech !  
What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,

Sweet interjections ! if he learn but those ? 400  
Let rev'rend churls his ignorance rebuke,  
Who starv'd upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,  
The parson knows enough, who knows a duke."  
Egregious purpose ! worthily begun  
In barb'rous prostitution of your son ; 405  
Press'd on *his* part by means that would disgrace  
A scriv'ner's clerk, or footman out of place,  
And ending, if at last its end be gain'd, -  
In sacrilege, in God's own house profan'd !  
It may succeed ; and, if his sins should call 410  
For more than common punishment, it shall ;  
'The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth  
Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,  
To occupy a sacred awful post,  
In which the best and worthiest tremble most. 415  
The *royal letters* are a thing of course,  
A king, that would, might recommend his horse ;  
And deans, no doubt, and chapters with one voice,  
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.  
Behold your bishop ; well he plays his part, 420  
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,  
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,  
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.  
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest  
A piece of mere church furniture at best ; 425  
To live estrang'd from God his total scope,  
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.  
But fair although and feasible it seem,  
Depend not much upon your golden dream :  
For Providence, that seems concern'd t' exempt 430  
The hallow'd bench from absolute contempt,  
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,  
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;  
And therefore 'tis that though the sight be rare,  
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there. 435  
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,  
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;

The most disint'rested and virtuous minds,  
In early years connected, time unbinds,  
New situations give a diff'rent cast 440  
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;  
And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,  
Soon shows the strong similitude revers'd.  
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
And make mistakes for manhood to reform. 445  
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,  
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known ;  
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
But learns his errour in maturer years,  
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd, 450  
Shows all its rents and patches to the world :  
If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,  
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
'Twere wiser sure t' inspire a little heart  
With just abhorrence of so mean a part, 455  
Than set your son to work at a vile trade  
For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our publick hives of puerile resort,  
That are of chief and most approv'd report,  
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul, 460  
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.  
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass  
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass—  
That with a world, not often over nice,  
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ; 465  
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,  
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—  
Contributes most perhaps t' enhance their fame ;  
And emulation is its specious name.

Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal, 470  
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel ;  
The prize of beauty<sup>1</sup> in a woman's eyes  
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.  
The spirit of that competition burns  
With all varieties of ill by turns ; 475

Each vainly magnifies his own success,  
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,  
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,  
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,  
And labours to surpass him day and night, 480  
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.

The spur is pow'rful, and I grant its force ;  
It pricks the genius forward in its course,  
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth ;  
And, felt alike by each, advances both : 485

But judge, where so much evil intervenes,  
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.  
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert  
Against a heart deprav'd and temper hurt ;  
Hurt, too, perhaps, for life ; for early wrong, 490  
Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;  
And you are stanch indeed in learning's cause,  
If you can crown a discipline, that draws  
Such mischiefs after it with much applause.

Connexion form'd for int'rest, and endear'd 495  
By selfish views, thus censur'd and cashier'd :  
And emulation, as engend'ring hate,  
Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate :  
The props of such proud seminaries fall,  
The Jachin and the Boaz of them all. 500

Great schools rejected then, as those that swell  
Beyond a size that can be manag'd well,  
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,  
And small academies win all the praise ?  
Force not my drift beyond its just intent, 505

I praise a school as Pope a government ;  
So take my judgment in his language dress'd,  
" Whate'er is best administer'd is best."

Few boys are born with talents that excel,  
But all are capable of living well ; 510

Then ask not, Whether limited or large ?  
But, Watch they strictly, or neglect their charge ?

If anxious only, that their boys may *learn*,  
 While *morals* languish, a despis'd concern,  
 The great and small deserve one common blame, 515  
 Diff'rent in size, but in effect the same.  
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,  
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;  
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,  
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ; 520  
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,  
 Traps to catch youth are more abundant too.  
 If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,  
 Keen in pursuit, and vig'rous to retain,  
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill ; 525  
 As, wheresoever taught, so form'd he will ;  
 The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,  
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.  
 But if, with all his genius, he betray,  
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay, 530  
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,  
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame ;  
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred  
 The symptoms, that you see with so much dread :  
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone 535  
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.  
 O 'tis a sight to be with joy perus'd,  
 By all whom sentiment has not abus'd ;  
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace  
 Of those who never feel in the right place ; 540  
 A sight surpass'd by none that we can show,  
 'Though Vestris on one leg still shine below ;  
 A father blest with an ingenuous son,  
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one ;  
 How !—turn again to tales long since forgot, 545  
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest ?—Why not ?  
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,  
 To take in childish plays a childish part ;  
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy  
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy ; 550



Then why resign into a stranger's hand  
 A task as much within your own command,  
 That God and Nature, and your int'rest too,  
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you?  
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown 555  
 For one, whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round  
 your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,  
 How does it lac'rate both your heart and his!  
 Th' indented stick, that loses day by day  
 Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away, 560  
 Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,  
 With what intense desire he wants his home.  
 But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof  
 Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,  
 Harmless, and safe, and nat'ral, as they are 565  
 A disappointment waits him even there:  
 Arriv'd, he feels an unexpected change,  
 He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange;  
 No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,  
 His fav'rite stand between his father's knees, 570  
 But seeks the corner of some distant seat,  
 And eyes the door, and watches a retreat;  
 And, least familiar where he should be most,  
 Feels all his happiest privileges lost.  
 Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect 575  
 Of love by absence chill'd into respect.  
 Say, what accomplishments, at school acquir'd,  
 Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesir'd?  
 Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,  
 Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none; 580  
 None that, in thy domestick snug recess,  
 He had not made his own with more address,  
 Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,  
 And better never learn'd, or left behind.  
 Add, too, that, thus estrang'd, thou canst obtain 585  
 By no kind arts his confidence again;

That here begins with most that long complaint  
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint ;  
Which, oft neglected in life's waning years  
A parent pours into regardless ears. 590

Like caterpillars dangling under trees  
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,  
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace  
The boughs in which are bred th' unseemly race :  
While ev'ry worm industriously weaves 595

And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves ;  
So num'rous are the follies that annoy  
The mind and heart of ev'ry sprightly boy ;  
Imaginations noxious and perverse,  
Which admonition can alone disperse, 600

Th' encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,  
Patient, affectionate, of high command,  
To check the procreation of a breed  
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.

'Tis not enough, that Greek or Roman page, 605  
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;  
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend  
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend  
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,

Watch his emotions, and control their tide ; 610  
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,  
A tax of profit from his very play,  
T' impress a value not to be eras'd,

On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste  
And seems it nothing in a father's eye, 615

That unimprov'd those many moments fly  
And is he well content his son should find  
No nourishment to feed his growing mind,  
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declin'd ?  
For such is all the mental food purvey'd 620

By publick hacknies in the schooling trade ;  
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store  
Of syntax, truly, but with little more ;

Dismiss their cares, when they dismiss their flock,  
 Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock. 625

Perhaps a father, bless'd with any brains,  
 Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,  
 T' improve this diet, at no great expense,  
 With sav'ry truth and wholesome common sense:  
 To lead his son, for prospects of delight, 630

To some not steep, though philosophick height,  
 Thence to exhibit to his wond'ring eyes  
 Yon circling worlds, their distance and their size,  
 The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,  
 And the harmonious order of them all ; 635

To show him in an insect or a flow'r  
 Such microscopick proof of skill and pow'r,  
 As, hid from ages past, God now displays,  
 To combat atheists with in modern days ;  
 To spread the earth before him, and commend, 640  
 With designation of the fingers' end,

Its various parts to his attentive note,  
 Thus bringing home to him the most remote ;  
 To teach his heart to glow with gen'rous flame,  
 Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame ; 645  
 And, more than all, with commendation due,

To set some living worthy in his view,  
 Whose fair example may at once inspire  
 A wish to copy what he must admire.

Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears  
 Though solid, not too weighty for his years, 651  
 Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,  
 When health demands it, of athletick sort,

Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,  
 And more than one, perhaps, that I have seen— 655  
 An evidence and reprehension both  
 Of the mere school-boy's lean and tardy growth.

Art thou a man professionally tied,  
 With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,  
 Too busy to intend a meaner care, 660  
 Than how t' enrich thyself, and next thine heir :

Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art )  
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart :  
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad ;  
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad ; 665  
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then  
Heard to articulate like other men ;  
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,  
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force ;  
And his address, if not quite French in ease, 670  
Not English stiff, but frank, and form'd to please ;  
Low in the world because he scorns its arts ;  
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts ;  
Unpatronis'd, and therefore little known ;  
Wise for himself and his few friends alone— 675  
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,  
Arm'd for a work too difficult for thee ;  
Prepar'd by taste, by learning, and true worth,  
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth ;  
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove 680  
The force of discipline when back'd by love ;  
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,  
His mind inform'd, his morals undefil'd.  
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show  
No spots contracted among grooms below, 685  
Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd  
By footman Tom for witty and refin'd.  
There, in his commerce with the liv'ried herd,  
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd ;  
For since, (so fashion dictates,) all who claim 690  
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,  
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,  
To entertain a thief or two in pay,  
(And they that can afford th' expense of more,  
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,) 695  
Great cause occurs, to save him from a band  
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;  
A point secur'd, if once he be supply'd  
With some such Mentor always at his side.

Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound, 700  
Were occupation easier to be found,  
Were education, else so sure to fail,  
Conducted on a manageable scale,  
And schools, that have outliv'd all just esteem,  
Exchang'd for the secure domestick scheme.— 705  
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,  
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,  
And, as thou wouldst th' advancement of thine heir  
In all good faculties beneath his care,  
Respect, as is but rational and just, 710  
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.  
Despis'd by thee, what more can he expect  
From youthful folly than the same neglect?  
A flat and fatal negative obtains,  
That instant, upon all his future pains; 715  
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,  
And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend  
Are a stream chok'd, or trickling to no end.  
Doom him not then to solitary meals;  
But recollect that he has sense, and feels; 720  
And that, possessor of a soul refin'd,  
An upright heart and cultivated mind,  
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,  
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.  
And, if admitted at thy board he sit, 725  
Account him no just mark for idle wit;  
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains  
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains;  
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath;  
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth. 730  
And, trust me, his utility may reach  
To more than he is hir'd or bound to teach;  
Much trash unutter'd, and some ills undone,  
Through rev'rence of the censor of thy son.  
But, if thy table be indeed unclean, 735  
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,

And thou a wretch, whom, foll'wing her own plan  
The world accounts an honourable man,  
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried  
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side ; 740  
'Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
That any thing but vice could win thy love ;—  
Or hast thou a polite. card-playing wife,  
Chain'd to the routs that she frequents for life ;  
Who, just when industry begins to snore, 745  
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;  
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own  
With half the chariots and sedans in town,  
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst ;  
Not very sober though, nor very chaste ; 750  
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,  
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,  
And thou at best, and in thy sob'rest mood,  
A trifler, vain and empty of all good ;  
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none, 755  
Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son.  
Sav'd from his home, where every day brings forth  
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,  
Find him a better in a distant spot,  
Within some pious pastor's humble cot, 760  
Where vile example, (yours I chiefly mean,  
The most seducing, and the oft'nest seen,)  
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,  
Nor yet perhaps incurably impress'd.  
Where early rest makes early rising sure, 765  
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure  
Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;  
Or, if it enter, soon starv'd out again :  
Where all th' attention of his faithful host,  
Discreetly limited to two at most, 770  
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,  
And not at last evaporate in air ;  
Where, & illness aiding study, and his mind  
Serene, & to his duties much inclin'd,

Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home, 775  
 Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,  
 His virtuous toil may terminate at last  
 In settled habit and decided taste.—  
 But whom do I advise ? the fashion led,  
 'Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead, 780  
 Whom care and cool deliberation suit  
 Not better much than spectacles a brute ;  
 Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,  
 Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;  
 Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown, 785  
 And much too gay t' have any of their own.  
 But courage, man ! methought the muse replied  
 Mankind are various, and the world is wide :  
 The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,  
 And form'd of God without a parent's mind, 790  
 Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,  
 Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;  
 And, while on publick nurs'ries they rely,  
 Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,  
 Irrational in what they thus prefer 795  
 No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.  
 But all are not alike Thy warning voice  
 May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;  
 And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,  
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care, 800  
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may  
     reach  
 'Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,)  
 Will need no stress of argument t' enforce  
 'Th' expedience of a less advent'rous course ;  
 'The rest will slight thy counsel or condemn ; 805  
 But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.  
 To you then, tenants of life's middle state,  
 Securely plac'd between the small and great,  
 Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains  
 Two thirds of all the virtue that remains, 810



Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn  
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.  
Look round you on a world perversely blind :  
See what contempt is fall'n on human kind ;  
See wealth abus'd, and dignities misplac'd, 815  
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgrac'd,  
Long lines of ancestry, renown'd of old,  
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold ;  
See Bedlam's closeted and hand-cuff'd charge  
Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large : 820  
See great commanders making war a trade ;  
Great lawyers lawyers without study made :  
Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ  
Is odious, and their wages all their joy ;  
Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves 825  
With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves ;  
See womanhood despis'd. and manhood sham'd  
With infamy too nauseous to be nam'd ;  
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,  
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen, 830  
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue  
On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,  
Now flush'd with drunk'ness, now with whoredom  
pale,  
Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;  
See volunteers in all the vilest arts 835  
Man well endow'd, of honourable parts,  
Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools,  
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools,  
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,  
That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still ; 840  
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark  
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark :  
As here and there a twinkling star descried,  
Serves but to show how black is all beside.  
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone 845  
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,

And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,  
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,  
And say, My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,  
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home, 850  
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;  
What character, what turn thou wilt assume  
From constant converse with I know not whom ;  
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,  
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose ; 856  
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,  
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.  
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,  
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids ; 860  
Free too, and under no constraining force,  
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course ;  
Lay such a stake upon the losing side  
Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?  
Thou canst not ! Nature, pulling at thine heart, 865  
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.  
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tend'rest plea,  
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,  
Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay  
A brood of asps or quicksands in his way ; 870  
Then, only govern'd by the self-same rule  
Of nat'ral pity, send him not to school.  
No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,  
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone ?  
And hop'st thou not, ('tis ev'ry father's hope,) 875  
That since thy strength must with thy years elope,  
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage  
Health's last farewell, a staff in thine old age,  
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,  
Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs, 880  
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,  
And give thy life its only cordial left !  
Aware then how much danger intervenes,  
To compass that good end forecast the means,

His heart, now passive, yields to thy command ; 885  
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.

If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,  
Nor heed what guest there enter and abide,  
Complain not if attachments lewd and base  
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place 890

But, if thou guard its sacred chambers sure  
From vicious inmates and delights impure,  
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,  
And keep him warm and filial to the last ;  
Or, if he prove unkind, (as who can say 895  
But, being man, and therefore frail, he may ?)  
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,  
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

O barb'rous ! wouldst thou with a Gothick hand  
Pull down the schools—what !—all th' schools i' th'  
land ; 900

Or throw them up to liv'ry nags and grooms,  
Or turn them into shops and auction rooms ?  
A captious question, sir, (and yours is one,)  
Deserves an answer similar or none.  
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ, 905  
(Appris'd that he is such,) a careless boy,  
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,  
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray ?  
Survey our schools and colleges, and see  
A sight not much unlike my simile. 910

From education, as the leading cause,  
The publick character its colour draws ;  
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.  
And, though I would not advertise them yet, 915  
Nor write on each—*This building to be let*,  
Unless the world were all prepar'd t' embrace  
A plan well worthy to supply their place ;  
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,  
To cultivate and keep the *morals* clean, 920  
(Forgive the crime,) I wish them, I confess,  
Or better manag'd, or encourag'd less.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.



THE swallows in their torpid state  
Compose their useless wing,  
And bees in hives as idly wait  
The call of early Spring.

II.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,  
The wildest wind that blows,  
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,  
Secure of their repose.

III.

But man, all feeling and awake,  
The gloomy scene surveys !  
With present ills his heart must ache,  
And pant for brighter days.

IV.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,  
Bids me and Mary mourn ;  
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,  
And whispers your return.

V.

Then April with her sister May,  
Shall chase him from the bow'rs,  
And weave fresh garlands ev'ry day,  
To crown the smiling hours.

VI.

And if a tear, that speaks regret,  
Of happier times, appear,  
A glimpse of joy, that we have met,  
Shall shine and dry the tear.

*On the receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk, the gift of my cousin Ann Bodham.*



O THAT those lips had language ! Life has pass'd  
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
 The same, that oft in childhood solac'd me ;  
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
 “ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away ! ”  
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes,  
 (Bless'd be the art that can immortalize,  
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannick claim  
 To quench it,) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here !  
 Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,  
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long.  
 I will obey, not willingly alone,  
 But gladly, as the precept were her own :  
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?  
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?  
 Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss,  
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss--  
 Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.  
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,

I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And turning from my nurs'ry window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was—where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!  
Thy maidens, griev'd themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,  
And disappointed still, was still deceiv'd.  
By expectation ev'ry day beguil'd,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till all my stock of infant sorrows spent,  
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,  
But though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;  
And where the gard'ner, Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the publick way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,  
'Tis now become a hist'ry little known,  
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.  
Short-liv'd possession! but the record fair,  
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm, that has effac'd  
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;  
'Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
'The biscuit, or confectionary plum,  
'The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:  
All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,

Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks  
That humour interpos'd too often makes ;  
All this still legible in mem'ry's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may :  
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
Not scorn'd in Heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissu'd flow'rs,  
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,  
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile,)  
Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?  
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might—  
But no—what here we call our life is such,  
So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,  
That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast,  
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd,)  
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,  
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
There sits quiescent on the floods that show  
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
While airs impregnated with incense play  
Around her fanning light her streamers gay ;  
So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore,  
" Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"\*  
And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide  
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.  
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distress'd



Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,  
Sails ripp'd, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current's thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.  
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he !  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the Earth ;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.  
And now farewell—Time unrevok'd has run  
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done,  
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;  
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,  
Without the sin of violating thine ;  
And while the wings of Fancy still are free,  
And I can view this mimick show of thee,  
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
Thyself remov'd, thy pow'r to sooth me left.

## FRIENDSHIP.



WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,  
But men unqualified and base

Will boast it their possession ?  
Profusion apes the nobler part  
Of liberality of heart,  
And dulness of discretion.

If ev'ry polish'd gem we find  
Illuminating heart or mind,  
Provoke to imitation ;  
No wonder friendship does the same,  
That jewel of the purest flame,  
Or rather constellation

No knave but boldly will pretend  
The requisites that form a friend,  
A real and a sound one ;  
Nor any fool, he would deceive,  
But proves as ready to believe,  
And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,  
Boys care but little whom they trust,  
An error soon corrected—  
For who but learns in riper years,  
That man, when smoothest he appears,  
Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,  
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,  
And taken trash for treasure,  
We should unwarily conclude  
Friendship a false ideal good,  
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare  
Is yet no subject of despair ;  
Nor is it wise complaining,  
If either on forbidden ground,  
Or where it was not to be found,  
We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,  
That stands on sordid interest,  
Or mean self-love erected :  
Nor such as may awhile subsist,  
Between the sot and sensualist,  
For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come dispos'd  
T' exhibit in full bloom dispos'd  
The graces and the beauties,  
'That form the character he seeks,  
For 'tis a union that bespeaks  
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,  
And equal truth on either side,  
And constantly supported ;  
'Tis senseless arrogance t' accuse  
Another of sinister views,  
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice ?  
It is indeed above all price,  
And must be made the basis ;  
But ev'ry virtue of the soul  
Must constitute the charming whole,  
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide  
The closest knot that may be tied,  
By ceaseless sharp corrosion ;  
A temper passionate and fierce  
May suddenly your joys disperse  
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite  
In hopes of permanent delight—  
The secret just committed,  
Forgetting its important weight,  
They drop through mere desire to prate,  
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,  
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,  
If envy chance to creep in ;  
An envious man, if you succeed,  
May prove a dang'rous foe indeed,  
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,  
So jealousy looks forth distress'd  
On good, that seems approaching ;  
And if success his steps attend,  
Discerns a rival in a friend,  
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name  
Unless belied by common fame,  
Are sadly prone to quarrel,  
To deem the wit a friend displays  
A tax upon their own just praise,  
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee,  
Will seldom scruple to make free  
With friendship's finest feeling ;  
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
And say he wounded you in jest,  
By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear  
For tattlers, will be sure to hear  
The trumpet of contention ;  
Aspersions is the babblers' trade,  
To listen is to lend him aid,  
And rush into dissension.

A friendship, that in frequent fits  
Of controversial rage emits

The sparks of disputation,  
Like hand in hand insurance plates,  
Most unavoidably creates  
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul  
True as a needle to the pole,

Their humour yet so various,  
They manifest their whole life through  
The needle's deviations too,  
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet  
On terms of amity complete,

Plebeians must surrender  
And yield so much to noble folk,  
It is combining fire with smoke,  
Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene  
(As Irish bogs are always green,)

They sleep secure from waking :  
And are indeed a bog that bears  
Your unparticipated cares  
Unmov'd and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix  
Their het'rogeneous politicks,

Without an effervescence,  
Like that of salts with lemon juice,  
Which does not, yet like that produce  
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,  
And make a calm of human life ;

But friends that chance to differ  
On points which God has left at large,  
How freely will they meet and charge !  
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent  
Needs no expense of argument,  
No cutting and contriving—  
Seeking a real friend we seem  
T' adopt the chemist's golden dream,  
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,  
Some blemish in due time made known  
By trespass or omission ;  
Sometimes occasion brings to light  
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,  
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man  
As circumspectly as you can,  
And, having made election,  
Beware no negligence of yours,  
Such as a friend but ill endures,  
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,  
That friends should be sincere and just,  
That constancy befits them,  
Are observations on the case,  
That savour much of common-place,  
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,  
An architect requires alone,  
To finish a fine building—  
The palace were but half complete,  
If he could possibly forget  
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack  
And proves by thumps upon your back  
How he esteems your merit,  
Is such a friend, that one had need  
Be very much his friend indeed,  
To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,  
Or something not to be defin'd.

First fixes our attention :  
So manners decent and polite,  
The same we practis'd at first sight,  
Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,  
" Say little, and hear all you can."

Safe policy, but hateful—  
So barren sands imbibe the show'r,  
But render neither fruit nor flow'r  
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,  
Shall find me as reserv'd as he,  
No subterfuge or pleading  
Shall win my confidence again—  
I will by no means entertain  
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas ! at last  
These are but samples, and a taste  
Of evils yet unmention'd—  
May prove the task a task indeed,  
In which 'tis much if we succeed,  
However well intention'd.

Pursue the search, and you will find  
Good sense and knowledge of mankind  
To be at least expedient,  
And, after summing all the rest,  
Religion ruling in the breast  
A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shown  
The Saviour's history makes known,  
Though some have turn'd and turn'd it ;  
And whether being craz'd or blind,  
Or seeing with a biass'd mind,  
Have not, it seems, discern'd it.



O Friendship ! if my soul forego  
 Thy dear delights while here below  
 To mortify and grieve me,  
 May I myself at last appear  
 Unworthy, base, and insincere,  
 Or may my friend deceive me !



## THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold  
 That title now too trite and old,)  
 A man, once young, who liv'd retir'd  
 As hermit could have well desir'd,  
 His hours of study clos'd at last,  
 And finish'd his concise repast,  
 Stopp'd his cruise, replac'd his book  
 Within his customary nook,  
 And, staff in hand, set forth to share  
 The sober cordial of sweet air,  
 Like Isaac, with a mind applied  
 To serious thought at ev'ning tide.  
 Autumnal rains had made it chill,  
 And from the trees that fring'd his hill,  
 Shades slanting at the close of day  
 Chill'd more his else delightful way,  
 Distant a little mile he spied  
 A western bank's still sunny side,  
 And right toward the favour'd place  
 Proceeding with his nimblest pace,  
 In hope to bask a little yet,  
 Just reach'd it when the sun was set

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs !  
 Learns something from whate'er occurs—  
 And hence, he said, my mind computes  
 The real worth of man's pursuits.  
 His object chosen, wealth, or fame,  
 Or other sublunary game,  
 Imagination to his view  
 Presents it deck'd with ev'ry hue  
 That can seduce him not to spare  
 His pow'rs of best exertion there,  
 But youth, health, vigour, to expend  
 On so desirable an end.  
 Ere long approach life's ev'ning shades,  
 The glow that fancy gave it fades ;  
 And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace  
 That first engag'd him in the chase.

True, answer'd an angelick guide,  
 Attendant at the senior's side—  
 But whether all the time it cost,  
 To urge the fruitless chase be lost,  
 Must be decided by the worth  
 Of that which call'd his ardour forth.  
 Trifles pursu'd, whate'er th' event,  
 Must cause him shame or discontent :  
 A vicious object still is worse,  
 Successful there he wins a curse.  
 But he, whom e'en in life's last stage  
 Endeavours laudable engage,  
 Is paid, at least in peace of mind,  
 And sense of having well design'd ;  
 And if, ere he attain his end,  
 His sun precipitate descend,  
 A brighter prize than that he meant  
 Shall recompense his mere intent.  
 No virtuous wish can bear a date  
 Either too early or too late.

## CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON,

(NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)



SHE came—she is gone—we have met—

And meet perhaps never again ;

The sun of that moment is set,

And seems to have risen in vain.

Catharina has fled like a dream—

(So vanishes pleasure, alas !)

But has left a regret and esteem,

That will not so suddenly pass.

The last ev'ning ramble we made,

Catharina, Maria, and I,

Our progress was often delay'd

By the nightingale warbling nigh.

We paus'd under many a tree,

And much she was charm'd with a tone

Less sweet to Maria and me,

Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,

And gave them a grace so divine,

As only her musical tongue

Could infuse into numbers of mine.

The longer I heard, I esteem'd

The work of my fancy the more,

And e'en to myself never seem'd

So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed  
In number the days of the year,  
Catharina, did nothing impede,  
Would feel herself happier here ;  
For the close-woven arches of limes  
On the banks of our river, I know,  
Are sweeter to her many times  
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endu'd  
With a well-judging taste from above,  
Then whether embellish'd or rude  
'Tis nature alone that we love ;  
The achievements of art may amuse,  
May even our wonder excite,  
But groves, hills, and vallies, diffuse  
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since, then, in the rural recess  
Catharina alone can rejoice,  
May it still be her lot to possess  
The scene of her sensible choice !  
To inhabit a mansion remote  
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,  
And by Philomel's annual note  
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre  
To wing all her moments at home ;  
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,  
As oft as it suits her to roam ;  
She will have just the life she prefers,  
With little to hope or to fear,  
And ours would be pleasant as hers,  
Might we view her enjoying it here.

## THE FAITHFUL BIRD.



THE green house is my summer seat ;  
My shrubs displac'd from that retreat  
Enjoy'd the open air ;  
Two Goldfinches, whose sprightly song,  
Had been their mutual solace long,  
Liv'd happy pris'ners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,  
That flutter loose on golden wing,  
And frolick where they list ;  
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,  
But that delight they never knew  
And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,  
With force not easily suppress'd ;  
And Dick felt some desires,  
That after many an effort vain,  
Instructed him at length to gain  
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd t' invite  
The freeman to a farewell flight :  
But Tom was still confin'd :  
And Dick, although his way was clear,  
Was much too gen'rous and sincere,  
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,  
And chirp, and kiss he seem'd to say,  
You must not live alone—  
Nor would he quit that chosen stand,  
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,  
Return'd him to his own.

O ye who never taste the joys  
Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,  
Fandango, ball, and rout !  
Blush, when I tell you how a bird,  
A prison with a friend preferr'd  
To liberty without.



## THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass  
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,  
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,  
Where oft the bitch fox hides her hapless brood,  
Reserv'd to solace many a neighb'ring squire,  
That he may follow them through brake and brier,  
Contusion, hazarding of neck, or spine,  
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.  
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd  
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;  
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,  
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;  
And where the land slopes to its wat'ry bourn,  
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;  
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,  
And horrid brambles intertwine below ;  
A hollow scoop'd, I judge, in ancient time,  
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,  
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;  
Nor autumn yet had brush'd from ev'ry spray,  
With her chill hand the mellow leaves away ;

But corn was hous'd, and beans were in the stack ;  
Now therefore issu'd forth the spotted pack,  
With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats,  
With a whole gamut fill'd of heav'nly notes,  
For which, alas ! my destiny severe,  
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The sun, accomplishing his early march,  
His lamp now planted on Heav'n's topmost arch,  
When, exercise and air my only aim,  
And heedless whither, to that field I came,  
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound  
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,  
Or with the high-rais'd horn's melodious clang  
All Kilwick\* and all Dingleberry\* rang.

Sheep graz'd the field ; some with soft bosom press'd  
The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest ;  
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,  
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.  
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,  
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman with distended cheek,  
'Gan make his instrument of musick speak,  
And from within the wood that crash was heard,  
Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,  
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that graz'd,  
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gaz'd,  
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,  
Then cours'd the field around, and cours'd it round  
again ;

But, recollecting with a sudden thought,  
That flight in circles urg'd advanc'd them nought,  
They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,  
And thought again—but knew not what to think.

\* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.



The man to solitude accustom'd long  
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue ,  
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees,  
Have speech for him, and understood with ease ;  
After long drought when rains abundant fall,  
He hears the herbs and flow'rs rejoicing all ;  
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,  
How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;  
But, with precision nice, still, the mind  
He scans of ev'ry locomotive kind ;  
Birds of all feather, beasts of ev'ry name,  
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame ;  
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears  
Have all articulation in his ears ;  
He spells them true by intaution's light,  
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premis'd was needful as a text,  
To win due credence to what follows next.

Awhile they mus'd ; surveying ev'ry face,  
Thou hadst suppos'd them of superiour race ;  
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combin'd  
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,  
'That sage they seem'd as lawyers o'er a doubt,  
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;  
Or academick tutors, teaching youths,  
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematick truths ;  
When thus a mutton, statelier than the rest,  
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad, address'd.

Friends ! we have liv'd too long. I never heard  
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.  
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent  
In Earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,  
And from their prison-house below arise,  
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,  
I could be much compos'd, nor should appear,  
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.

Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd  
All night, me resting quiet in the fold,  
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,  
I could expound the melancholy tone ;  
Should deem it by our old companion made,  
The ass ; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,  
And being lost, perhaps, and wand'ring wide,  
Might be suppos'd to clamour for a guide.  
But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear  
That owns a carcass and not quake for fear ?  
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,  
And fang'd with brass, the demons are abroad ;  
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,  
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,  
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How ! leap into the pit our life to save ?  
To save our life leap all into the grave ?  
For can we find it less ? Contemplate first  
The depth how awful ! falling there we burst ;  
Or should the brambles, interpos'd, our fall  
In part abate, that happiness were small :  
For with a race like theirs no chance I see  
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.  
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,  
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,  
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues  
Of demons utter'd from whatever lungs,  
Sounds are but sounds, and till the cause appear,  
We have at least commodious standing here.  
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast  
From Earth or Hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,  
For Reynard, close attended at his heels  
By panting dog, tir'd man, and spatter'd horse,  
Through mere good fortune, took a diff'rent course

The flock grew calm again, and I the road  
Foll'wing, that led me to my own abode.  
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found  
Such cause of terrour in an empty sound,  
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

## MORAL.

Beware of desp'rate steps. The darkest day,  
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.



## BOADICEA

## AN ODE.

## I.

WHEN the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought with an indignant mien,  
Counsel of her country's gods.

## II.

Sage beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
Ev'ry burning word he spoke  
Full of rage, and full of grief

## III.

Princess! if our aged eyes  
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
All the terrours of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word  
In the blood that she hast spill'd ;  
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,  
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

## V.

Rome, for empire far renown'd,  
Tramples on a thousand states ;  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—  
Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !

## VI.

Other Romans shall arise,  
Heedless of a soldier's name ;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

## VII.

Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

## VIII.

Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway ;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they.

## IX.

Such the bard's prophetick words,  
Pregnant with celestial fire,  
Bending as he swept the chords  
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

## X.

She, with all a monarch's pride,  
Felt them in her bosom glow ;  
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died ;  
Dying hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
Heav'n awards the vengeance due ·  
Empire is on us bestow'd,  
Shame and ruin wait for you.



## HEROISM.

THERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire  
Slept unperceiv'd, the mountain yet entire ;  
When, conscious of no danger from below,  
She tower'd a cloudcapt pyramid of snow.  
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound  
The blooming groves that girdled her around.  
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,  
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines,)  
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assur'd,  
In peace upon her sloping sides matur'd.  
When on a day, like that of the last doom,  
A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,  
She teem'd and heav'd with an infernal birth,  
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.  
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,  
And hang their horrors in the neighb'ring skies,  
While through the stygian veil that blots the day,  
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.  
But O ! what muse, and in what pow'rs of song,  
Can trace the torrent as it burns along ?  
Havock and devastation in the van,  
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man,  
Vines, olives, herbage, forests, disappear,  
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons fruitless as they pass,  
See it an uninform'd and idle mass ;  
Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,  
Or blade that might redeem it from despair.  
Yet time, at length, (what will not time achieve ?)  
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.  
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,  
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.  
O bliss precarious and unsafe retreats,  
O charming Paradise of short-liv'd sweets !  
The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round,  
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound :  
Again the mountain feels the imprison'd foe,  
Again pours ruin on the vale below.  
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,  
That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,  
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,  
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,  
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;  
Behold in Ætna's emblematick fires  
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires.

Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,  
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,  
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,  
Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their own.  
Ill-fated race ! how deeply must they rue  
Their only crime, vicinity to you !  
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,  
Through the ripe harvest lies their destin'd road ;  
At ev'ry step beneath their feet they tread  
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread !  
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress  
Before them, and behind a wilderness.  
Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,  
Attend to finish what the sword begun .

And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,  
And Folly pays, resound at your return.  
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train  
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,  
And years of pining indigence must show  
What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,  
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease,)  
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,  
Gleans up the refuse of the gen'ral spoil,  
Rebuilds the tow'rs, that smok'd upon the plain,  
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art  
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part ;  
And the sad lesson must be learn'd once more,  
That wealth within is ruin at the door.  
What are ye, monarchs, laurell'd heroes, say,  
But Ætnas of the suff'ring world ye sway ?  
Sweet Nature, stripp'd of her embroider'd robe,  
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe ;  
And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,  
To prove you there destroyers as ye are.

O place me in some Heav'n-protected isle,  
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile :  
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,  
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood ;  
Where Pow'r secures what Industry has won ;  
Where to succeed is not to be undone ;  
A land, that distant tyrants hate in vain,  
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign ?

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL, WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM  
SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.



GO—thou art all unfit to share  
The pleasures of this place  
With such as its old tenants are,  
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides  
Aware of wintry storms,  
And wood-peckers explore the sides  
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn  
With frictions of her fleece ;  
And here I wander eve and morn,  
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah !—I could pity thee exil'd  
From this secure retreat—  
I would not lose it to be styl'd  
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight ;  
Thy pleasure is to show  
Thy magnanimity in fight,  
Thy prowess—therefore go—

I care not whether east or north,  
So I no more may find thee ;  
The angry muse thus sings thee forth,  
And claps the gate behind thee.



## ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S  
HAPPY RECOVERY.



I RANSACK'D for a theme of song,  
Much ancient chronicle, and long ;  
I read of bright embattled fields,  
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,  
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast  
Prowess to dissipate a host ;  
Through tomes of fable and of dream  
I sought an eligible theme,  
But none I found, or found them shar'd  
Already by some happier bard.

To modern times, with Truth to guide  
My busy search, I next applied ;  
Here cities won, and fleets dispers'd,  
Urg'd loud a claim to be rehears'd,  
Deeds of unperishing renown,  
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.

Thus, as the bee, from bank to bow'r,  
Assiduous sips at ev'ry flow'r,  
But rests on none, till that be found,  
Where most nectareous sweets abound—  
So I, from theme to theme display'd  
In many a page historick stray'd,  
Siege after siege, fight after fight  
Contemplating with small delight,  
(For feats of sanguinary hue  
Not always glitter in my view,)

Till, settling on the current year,  
I found the far-sought treasure near ;  
A theme for poetry divine,  
A theme t' ennoble even mine,  
In memorable eighty-nine.

The spring of eighty-nine shall be  
An era cherish'd long by me,  
Which joyful I will oft record,  
And thankful at my frugal board ;  
For then the clouds of eighty-eight  
That threaten'd England's trembling state  
With loss of what she least could spare,  
Her sovereign's tutelary care,  
One breath of Heaven, that cried—Restore !  
Chas'd, never to assemble more ;  
And far the richest crown on earth,  
If valued by its wearer's worth,  
The symbol of a righteous reign  
Sat fast on George's brows again.

Then peace and joy again possess'd  
Our Queen's long agitated breast ;  
Such joy and peace as can be known  
By sufferers like herself alone,  
Who, losing, or supposing lost,  
The good on earth they valu'd most,  
For that dear sorrows' sake forego  
All hope of happiness below,  
Then suddenly regain the prize,  
And flash thanksgivings to the skies !

O Queen of Albion, queen of isles !  
Since all thy tears were chang'd to smiles,  
The eyes that never saw thee shine  
With joy not unallied to thine,  
Transports not chargeable with art  
Illume the land's remotest part,

And strangers to the air of courts,  
Both in their toils and at their sports,  
The happiness of answer'd pray'rs,  
That gilds thy features, show in theirs.

If they who on thy state attend,  
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,  
'Tis but the natural effect  
Of grandeur that ensures respect ;  
But she is something more than queen,  
Who is belov'd where never seen.



## HYMN,

*For the use of the Sunday School at Olney.*

HEAR, Lord, the song of praise and pray'r  
In heav'n thy dwelling place,  
From infants made the publick care,  
And taught to seek thy face.

Thanks for thy word and for thy day,  
And grant us, we implore,  
Never to waste, in sinful play  
Thy holy sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear—but O impart  
To each desires sincere,  
That we may listen with our heart,  
And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds engage  
Of older far than we,  
What hope that at our heedless age,  
Our minds should e'er be free ?

Much hope, if thou our spirits take  
 Under thy gracious sway,  
 Who canst the wisest wiser make,  
 And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss thy word bestows,  
 A sun that ne'er declines,  
 And be thy mercies shower'd on those,  
 Who plac'd us where it shines

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 STANZAS

*Subjoined to the Yearly Bill of Mortality of the Parish  
 of All-Saints, Northampton,\* Anno Domini 1787.*

---

*Pallida Mors, æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,  
 Regumque turres.* Horace.

Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door  
 Of royal halls, and hovels of the poor.

---

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run  
 The Nen's barge-laden wave,  
 All these, life's rambling journey done,  
 Have found their home, the grave.

Was man, (frail always) made more frail  
 Than in foregoing years?  
 Did famine or did plague prevail,  
 That so much death appears?

\* Composed for John Cox, parish clerk of Northampton.

No ; these were vig'rous as their sires,  
Nor plague nor famine came ;  
This annual tribute Death requires,  
And never waves his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,  
And some are mark'd to fall ;  
The axe will smite at God's command,  
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay-tree, ever green,  
With its new foliage on,  
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,  
I pass'd—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth,  
With which I charge my page ;  
A worm is in the bud of youth,  
And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure  
For yet an hour to come ;  
No med'cine, though it oft can cure,  
Can always balk the tomb.

And O ! that humble as my lot,  
And scorn'd as is my strain,  
These truths, though known, too much forgot,  
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,  
And ere he quits the pen,  
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,  
And answer all—Amen !

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

*Quod adest, memento  
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis  
Ritu ferunter.* Horace.

Improve the present hour, for all beside  
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

COULD I, from Heav'n inspir'd, as sure presage  
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,  
As I can number in my punctual page,  
And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet  
On which the press might stamp him next to die,  
And reading here his sentence, how replete  
With anxious meaning, heav'nward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys  
In which he sports away the treasure now ;  
And pray'r more seasonable than the noise  
Of drunkards, or the musick-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink  
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,  
Forc'd to a pause, would feel it good to think,  
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceiv'd ! Could I prophetick say  
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,  
The rest might then seem privileg'd to play ;  
But naming *none*, the voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light  
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—  
One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,  
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,  
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,  
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,  
Die self-accus'd of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for which no after-thrift atones,  
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin ;  
Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,  
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then ye living ! by the mouths be taught  
Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,  
That, soon or late, death also is your lot,  
And the next op'ning grave may yawn for you.

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1789.



...*Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.* VIFG.  
 There calm at length he breath'd his soul away.



"O MOST delightful hour by man  
 Experienc'd here below,  
 The hour that terminates his span,  
 His folly, and his wo !

Worlds should not bribe me back to tread  
 Again life's dreary waste,  
 To see again my day o'erspread  
 With all the gloomy past.

My home henceforth is in the skies,  
 Earth, seas, and sun, adieu !  
 All Heav'n unfolded to my eyes,  
 I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd  
 Of faith's supporting rod,  
 Then breath'd his soul into its rest,  
 The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few  
 Sincere on virtue's side ;  
 And all his strength from Scripture drew,  
 To hourly use applied.



That rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,  
 He hated, hop'd, and lov'd ;  
 Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd  
 But when his heart had rov'd.

For he was frail as thou or I,  
 And evil felt within ;  
 But when he felt it heav'd a sigh,  
 And loath'd the thought of sin.

Such liv'd Aspasio ; and at last  
 Call'd up from Earth to Heav'n,  
 The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,  
 By gales of blessing driv'n.

*His* joys be *mine*, each Reader cries,  
 When my last hour arrives :  
 They shall be yours, my verse replies,  
 Such only be your lives.



## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1790.



*Nè commonentem recta sperne.*  
 Despise not my good counsel.

Buchanan.



HE who sits from day to day,  
 Where the prison'd lark is hung,  
 Heedless of his loudest lay,  
 Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round  
Nightly lifts his voice on high,  
None, accusom'd to the sound,  
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verseman I and clerk,  
Yearly in my song proclaim  
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—  
And the foes unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,  
Publishing to all aloud—  
Soon the grave must be your home,  
And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,  
Oft repeated in your ears,  
Seems to sound too much in vain,  
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd  
Of such magnitude and weight,  
Grow, by being oft impress'd,  
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,  
Hear it often as we may ;  
New as ever seem our sins,  
Though committed every day.

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell—  
These alone, so often heard,  
No more move us than the bell,  
When some stranger is interr'd.

O then, ere the turf or tomb  
Cover us from every eye,  
Spirit of instruction come,  
Make us learn, that we must die.

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis atari!*  
Virg

Happy the mortal, who has trac'd effects  
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,  
And death, and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high  
Man thinks he fades too soon ;  
Though 'tis his privilege to die,  
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan  
His best concerns aright,  
Would gladly stretch life's little span  
To ages, if he might.

To ages in a world of pain,  
To ages, where he goes  
Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,  
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,  
Enamour'd of its harm !  
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,  
And still has pow'r to charm.

Whence has the world her magick pow'r ?  
Why deem we death a foe ?  
Recoil from weary life's best hour,  
And covet longer wo ?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft  
Her tale of guilt renews ;  
Her voice is terrible, though soft,  
And dread of death ensues.

Then, anxious to be longer spar'd,  
Man mourns his fleeting breath :  
All evils then seem light, compar'd  
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him, there's the fear  
That prompts the wish to stay :  
He has incurr'd a long arrear,  
And must despair to pay.

*Pay!*—follow Christ, and all is paid :  
His death your peace ensures ;  
Think on the grave where *he* was laid,  
And calm descend to *yours*.

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

*De sacris autem hoc sic una sententia, ut conserventur.*

Cic. de Leg.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that  
things sacred be inviolate.

He lives, who lives to God alone,  
And all are dead beside ;  
For other source than God is none  
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite  
His love as best we may :  
To make his precepts our delight,  
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring  
Of giddy joys compris'd,  
Is falsely nam'd, and no such thing,  
But rather death disguis'd.

Can life in them deserve the name,  
Who only live to prove  
For what poor toys they can disclaim  
An endless life above.

Who much diseas'd, yet nothing feel ;  
Much menac'd, nothing dread ;  
Have wounds, which only God can heal,  
Yet never ask his aid ?

Who deem his house a useless place,  
Faith want of common sense ;  
And ardour in the Christian race,  
A hypocrite's pretence ?

Who trample order ; and the day,  
Which God asserts his own,  
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,  
And worship chance alone ?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd  
On word and deed, imply  
The better part of man unblest'd  
With life that cannot die ;

Such want it, and that want uncur'd  
Till man resigns his breath,  
Speaks him a criminal, assur'd  
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course '  
Yet so will God repay  
Sabbaths profan'd without remorse,  
And mercy cast away.

## INSCRIPTION,

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.



PAUSE here, and think : a monitory rhyme  
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;  
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign ?"  
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye  
That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?  
Yet fear. Youth, ofttimes healthful and at ease,  
Anticipates a day it never sees ;  
And many a tomb, like *Hamilton's*, aloud  
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shroud."



## EPITAPH ON A HARE.



HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
Nor swifter grayhound follow,  
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo.

Old Tincey, surliest of his kind,  
Who, nurs'd with tender care,  
And to domestick bounds confin'd,  
Was still a wild Jack-hare

Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance ev'ry night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite,

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
And milk, and oats, and straw ;  
Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regal'd,  
On pippen's russet peel,  
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,  
Slic'd carrot pleas'd him well.

A turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon ne lov'd to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at ev'ning hours,  
For then he lost his fear,  
But most before approaching show'rs,  
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away,  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And ev'ry night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
For he would oft beguile  
My heart of thoughts, that made it ache,  
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath this walnut shade  
He finds his long last home,  
And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
Till gentler Puss shall come



He, still more aged, feels the shocks,  
From which no care can save,  
And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
Must soon partake his grave.



## EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,  
Qui totum novennium vixit,  
Puss.  
Siste paulisper,  
Qui præteriturus es,  
Et tecum sic reputa—  
Hunc neque canis venaticus,  
Nec plumbum missile,  
Nec laqueus,  
Nec imbres nimii,  
Confecere :  
Tamen mortuus est—  
Et moriar ego.

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE TREATMENT OF HIS  
HARES WAS INSERTED BY MR. COWPER IN THE GEN-  
TLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, WHENCE IT IS TRANSCRIBED.

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IN the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything ; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present ; and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in ; each had a separate apartment, so contrived, that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it ; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night re-

tired, each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him, (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick,) and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening: in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetorick did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney ; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He, too, was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention ; but if after his recovery I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was, however, very entertaining in his way ; even his surliness was matter of mirth ; and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him, too, I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage ; Tiney was not to be tamed at all : and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superiour to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat, being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence, that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest ; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in

hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them, no two could be found exactly similar ; a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem, too, to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites ; to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them ; but a miller coming in, engaged their affections at once : his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind, has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence : he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of these articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one ; at least grass is not their staple ; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them ; I suppose as a digestive. It happened that I was cleaning a bird cage while the hares were with me : I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which, being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously ; since that time I have generally taken

care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat straw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw, never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromattick herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk: they seem to resemble sheep in this, that if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot: to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening, and in the night: during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These, however, not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit, that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last. I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall: Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance—a spaniel that had never seen a hare, to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but

there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is, therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them; that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 23, 1784.

*Memorandum found among Mr. Cowper's papers.*

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

END OF VOL. II.

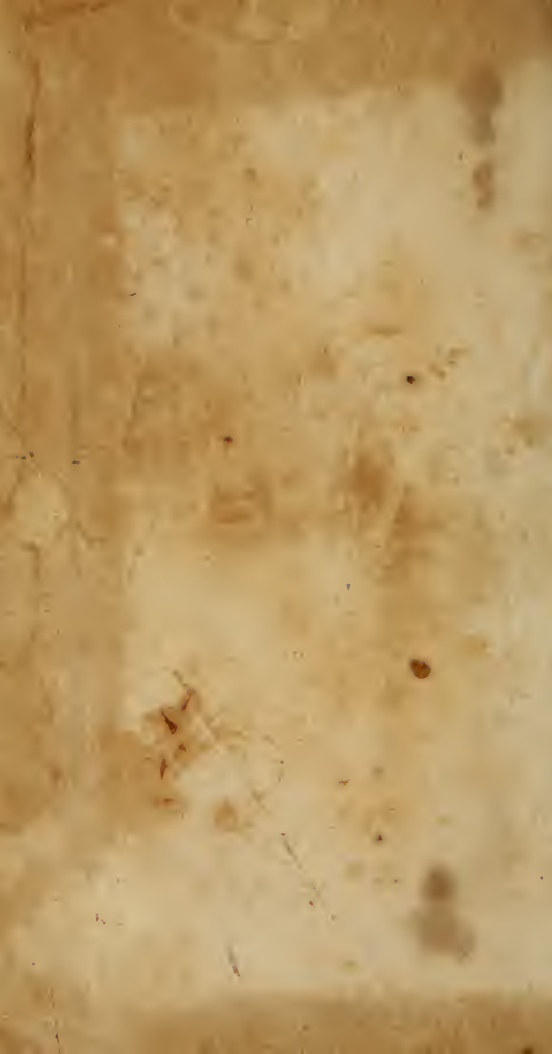












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